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Dame Nature put aside perfections three,
And said: "To one I'll give a perfect chin,
Unto another hair all silky curls,
Unto a third these teeth like purest pearls."
When, lo! a brownie small came creeping in
And stole them all for thee.

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"BUTTERFLIES."

From the Painting by Kate Perugini

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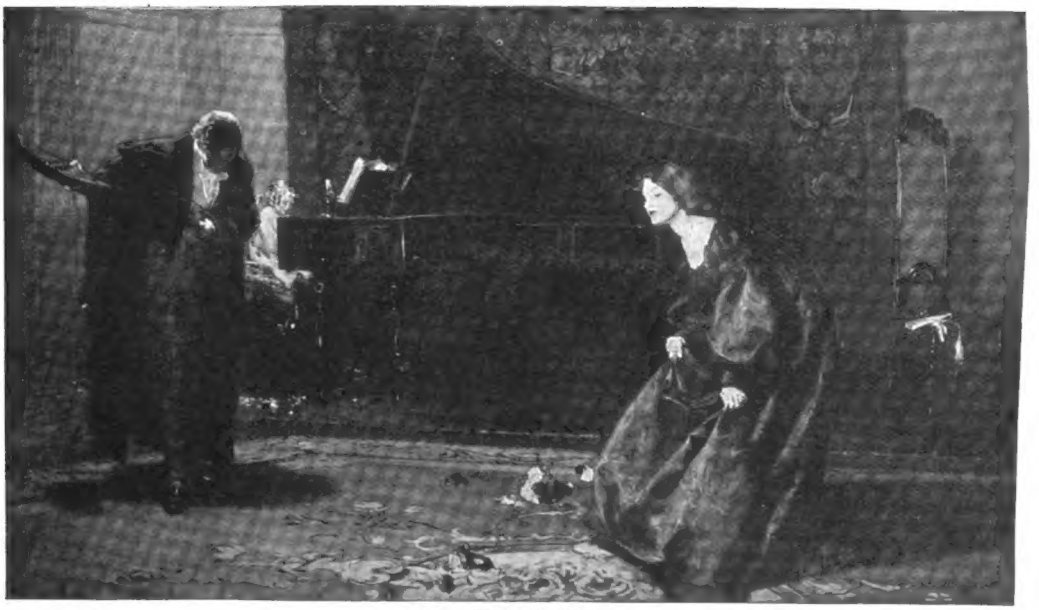

Photo by **A Song Without Words.** Henry Dixon & Sons.

From the painting by J. G. Hunter.

CUPID IN PAINT.

Different Conceptions of the God of Love by Various Artists, and their Methods of Painting Him.

By. Lenore Van der Veer.

The few English pictures of to-day in which Cupid figures as an actuality can be counted on the fingers of one hand—and, even when he does appear, it is seldom as the dimpled and altogether adorable sprite of tradition, but as some lanky, half-grown boy, stripped of his illusions.

The great Watts even painted him as a full-grown man more than once, then again depicting him in all his baby loveliness.

It is to France and Italy that the modern lover of Cupid in paint must turn. The French and Italians still hold him as an ideal subject for their painting, and never does an exhibition gather but several canvases hold him captive.

The fashion of painting Cupids has gone out almost altogether on our side of the Channel, the publishers of art things tell me. Such pictures no longer sell. The public want more matter-of-fact subjects to hang in their homes—scenes of the modern bustle and hurry of to-day—of warfare and brilliant events. No wonder, then, that the merry little love-god is altogether neglected and forgotten.

A hundred years ago, or even fifty years, the greatest English artists painted Cupid in their important works, as have most of the ordinary masters of the world. But fashions come and go in art as in all other things. And then Cupid is too bothersome to paint any more, he is such a restless "sitter"!

The big, warm heart of the great Watts responded to every charm of babyhood, and he was never too deeply absorbed in his mystical problems of colour and form to pass by a pretty child unheeded on his walks.

The beautiful little model for his Cupid fishing was found by him one wet and cold autumn morning playing with a miserable looking mongrel puppy in Cheyne Row, Chelsea.

The old artist was so struck by the child's beauty and apparent homelessness that he bundled the little dripping figure into his arms, and calling to the puppy set off with the two of them for a friend's studio near by, and it was there, in front of a comfortable fire, that the little future model for one of the master's most popular pictures wasted an

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entire morning of his precious time in evading, with childlike inconsistency, his kindly questionings as to her name and home.

"I'se Mavy," she would keep saying, and, "I seeps wif granny." Finally she was sent out with a servant in search of her "granny," and after many false turnings was brought into the one of her remembrance, when she gave a great gurgle of delight, exclaiming, like the tantalising little sprite she was: "Dis is Dode Stweet wer I seeps wif granny."

Watts had a wonderful way with children, and could get them to keep a pose when other artists would have been distracted by their restlessness. He always said that his wonderful fund of children's stories came out of his recollection of childhood days. But their endless quantity and originality of turn pointed very strongly to their having been bred in the artist's own mind.

By permission of Frederick Hollyer, 9 Pembroke Square, Kensington, W.
Good Luck To Your Fishing.
From the painting by G. F. Watts, R.A.

When he had decided on the best position for his baby model, he would fall to weaving all manner of fancy expressions round the idea expressed in the child's attitude, in this way keeping the little one interested in what it was supposed to be doing.

For instance, in the "Cupid Fishing," where the little figure is represented as kneeling down looking into the water, Mr. Watts managed to keep the baby intent on studying the pattern of the rug by telling her fanciful stories of what the "red leaf" or the "pink flower" was saying to her.

This same little girl was greatly interested n the growth of the wings on her dimpled back as the picture progressed, feeling for them as she was being undressed for the pose. "Me want fevvers, too," she would keep on saying.

About fifty years ago some fashionable painters abroad tried the painting of baby portraits in the style of Cupids, and the children of many French aristocrats are to be seen portrayed as the love-god in the galleries of Paris and Versailles. It is still done occasionally—one doting French mother even going so far as to have a most exquisitely painted frieze for her drawing-room done from studies of her two babies in the *rôle* of Cupid.

Jean Aubert is the Frenchman of all others for idealising babyhood into all that is most beautiful and adorable in its impersonation of Master Cupid. For over sixty years he has painted Cupids, and now, at eighty, he is still making fresh studies for future work.

M. Aubert began painting Cupids when a student at the Beaux Arts, and no other subject has since interested him in the least.

His Cupids have always been of the conventional type—plump and rosy bits of baby loveliness—but his themes are altogether original and his own. He has piloted the little love-god through many climes and various skies, in sunshine and in storm, yet always as triumphant and jubilant.

"Love is everywhere," M. Aubert keeps saying in his pictures—in snowstorms as well as by blazing firesides—on dull days as on bright ones; in fact, this artist would have us believe that there is very little going on in

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the world without this inquisitive little chap's presence.

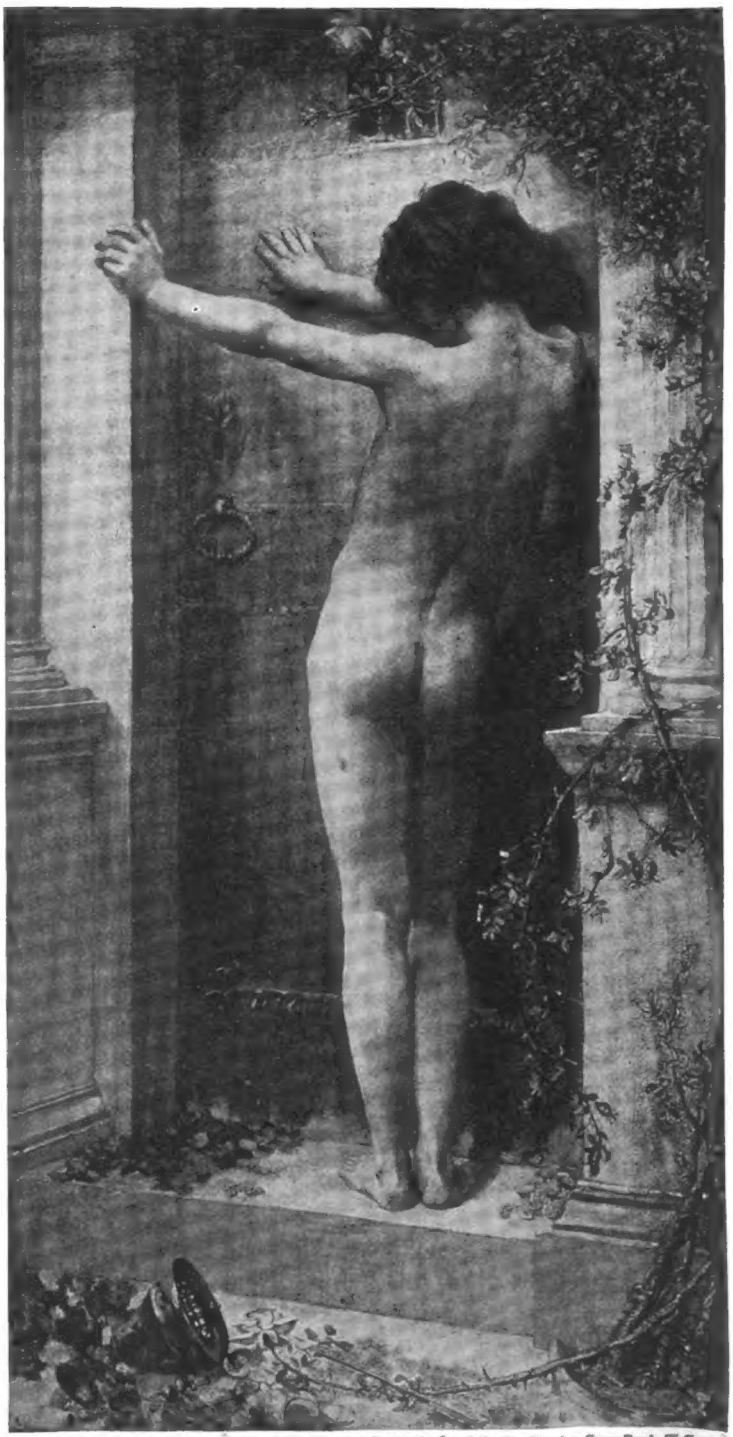
For years it was well known in Paris that M. Aubert would receive with great joy any pretty child who came to his splendid studio off the Avenue du Bois de Boulogne. Poor mothers from every quarter of the town grew to look upon him as a sort of godfather to their babies, for nearly all French children are pretty, and he had no trouble in securing the most delightful models to work from.

Little girls of two and a half to three years are the favourite models for Cupid, and the wings are most often done from sea-gulls' plumage; they hang suspended on wires from the ceiling and can be lowered at the will of the painter.

Often the little folks will imagine, on seeing these wings let down to touch their shoulders, that they are going to be made to fly, and some are frightened and cry, while others clap their hands and dance about in baby ecstasy.

Bougereau loved painting Cupids. His studies were always of a classical style, with little enough of the joyful sprightliness of bearing felt in the less severe studies of the love-god.

This artist had a way of using the same little model for all the figures in his groups of Cupids, some pictures showing from ten to twelve



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Love Locked Out.

From the painting by Anna Lea Merrett.

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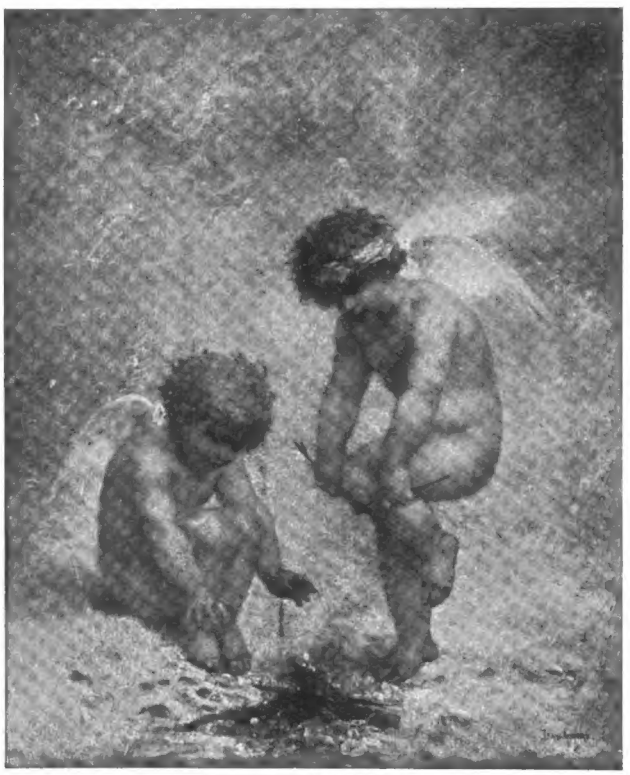
Cupids sporting about, all of whom are perfect duplicates of one another.

He did this purposely, as he held that as the love-god was a mythical figure he could have but one personality.

Other artists have held different opinions, and often have several tots posing for them at once, though it is rather a troublesome business when they all set to quarrelling or crying at once, as sometimes happens.

Then, too, there is usually trouble over which one shall carry the bow and arrow. They all fall to and tug and pull to get it away from the chosen one. It can be seen that Cupid painters haven't the easiest time in the world.

Watts is not the only artist who has painted Cupid as a grown man. This has been done some few times by other artists, though where the reason for doing so comes from is a mystery. Surely the love-god is an altogether irresponsible person wherein judgment and reason have no power whatsoever.



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Lost in the Snow.

From the painting by Jean Ernest Aubert.

The Cupid by Mrs. Merrett in the Tate Gallery shows a half-grown boy as Cupid devoid of his wings! The artist has called the picture "Love Locked Out," and shows him leaning unhappy, and most likely in tears, against a closed and barred doorway.

Mrs. Merrett says she depicted Cupid here without wings, more because the painting of them would have spoilt the modelling of the back than from any prejudice against the conventional conception of the god.

Long ago, when the world was more romantic than now, it was the fashion to have one's home hung with Cupid pictures, but nowadays such a thing would make one seem really foolish and sentimental, no matter how beautiful the pictures might be.

A French painter was trying hard to keep one of his restless little models for Cupid quiet one day, telling the child to sit still and look at him long enough for him to paint the twinkle in his eye. By-and-by the little chap asked in a very pleading way if he hadn't got through with the "twinkle" yet.

This same boy was very proud of being painted as the love-god. When his mother was putting him to bed the first night after his pose, he stood up in his little cot calling: "Daddy, tum, I'se Tupid," refusing to put on his night-clothes until his father had come in to admire him.

Cupids make expensive models, as they nearly always have to be accompanied by their mothers or grown-up sisters to keep them in some sort of order, else the artists would often fly from their studios in sheer desperation.

It is told of Bougereau, when at work on his "Infant Cupid and Psyche," that he often despaired of getting the baby models to kiss each other, no amount of promised sweets or frolics seeming to work any charm on the impetuous little rogues, who *would* insist on *biting* instead of kissing, when, of course, there would at once come screams and fits of temper—things that somehow did not add to the inspiration of the great master, who had eventually to get older and more willing models.

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Cupid Caught in Mammon s Golden Snares.
From the painting by Collier Smithers.

The little girl who posed for "Cupid Caught in Mammon's Golden Snares," had to hang partially from the ceiling, though resting her weight on a cushioned platform. She always persisted in going to sleep!

The model in the picture, "Cupid's Forge," sitting with her back to the spectator, used to cry when placed thus, thinking it a sign of having been naughty, and cried, "I'se dood—I'se dood," until the artist turned her round.

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Cupid's Forge.
From the painting by Collier Smithers.

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Love Asleep.

From the painting by Perrault.

Children often make charmingly irrelevant remarks while posing.

A little English girl-model of three and a half years quite took Watts by storm one day by exclaiming in the most sympathetic way when a sudden downpour of rain darkened the windows: "Poor daddy is in the sky, and will det dreffully wet!"

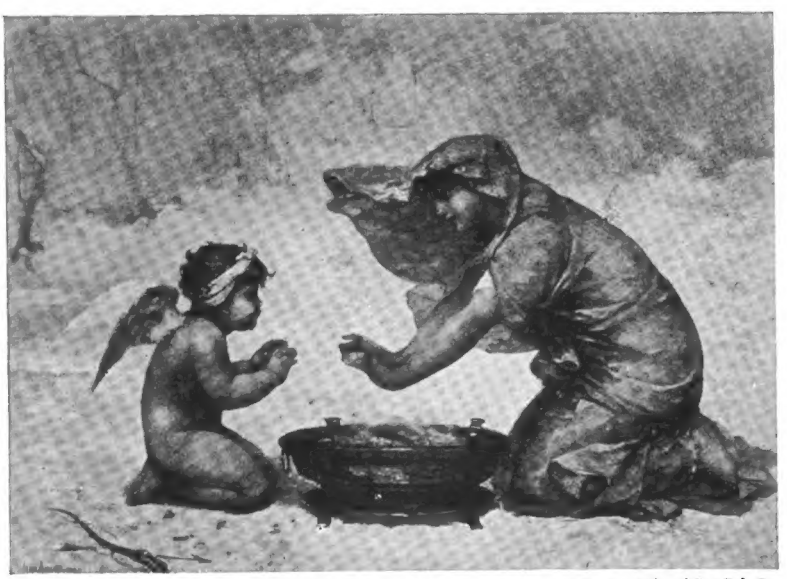
Some of the most successful painters of Cupid have been men who have used their own little folks for models and have made their studies in the home nursery. It is so altogether unnatural to expect a child to keep quiet or to feel at home in strange quarters, and it is only through watching them unawares that one gets at the artless charm of childhood.

Some artists even turn their studios into veritable nurseries for the time being, removing all the portable extras to make room for hobby-horses, dolls' furniture, and what not, having two or three rosy Cupids toddling and tumbling about until the painter finds it too wearying to keep it up any longer.

Even then, a few studies done at random as the restless little bodies twist and turn into a hundred different poses, each worthy of painting, must suffice for the most carefully worked-out picture, for Cupid is the same impossible little chap in art as in real life—no one ever quite succeeds in managing him.

Collier Smithers is one of the few modern Englishmen who has the courage to paint Cupids—despite the cry that they "don't sell."

Mr. Smithers has the two qualities most essential in the painting of the truly adorable type of Cupid—love for the old masters who have painted them so splendidly, and a genuine pleasure in having little folks scampering about his studio.



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Winter.

From the painting by Jean Ernest Aubert.

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THE STORY of A SALMON FLY

How the Fisherman Caught the Butterfly.

By Berta Ruck.

It was the Butterfly who began it!

One of those celebrated, lightning-swift caprices of hers had moved her, while the season was still in full swing, to send off a flying squadron of boy-messengers, a shower of telegrams that should cancel her ladyship's engagements for the next three weeks. She then dismissed her duenna, the daughter of a retired Indian judge, who wore grey and a meek look that lent conventionality to the Butterfly's whims. And she shut up her pretty bride-cake of a house in Park Lane, its white façade now almost hidden by the rose-coloured clusters of geraniums trailing from the balconies.

For "I'm sick of pink geraniums!" declared the Butterfly. "Oh, for woods sweet with wild roses, and meadows full of moon-daisies, and streams blue with forget-me not!"

"You've forgotten your party on the 8th," observed the man whom she had last refused to marry.

"I hate parties," she pouted. "I'm running away from them."

And the man guessed that she was also running away from the reproach in his eyes. Certainly she had treated him more disgracefully than she treated most people she encouraged to fall in love with her.

"I'm going," she continued, "to creep close to the heart of Nature—to associate only with her artless children. Good-bye, everybody! 'I shall fly—after summer, merrily'——"

She spread her chiffon wings and flew—leaving no address—to alight in a riverside village miles from anywhere.

* * * * *

So it happened that the Fisherman, winding up his reel with a sigh of resignation, turned from the stream to the meadow-path which led towards his cottage, and found himself in abrupt collision with something all white and fluttering, which had rushed towards him, gasping: "Save me—save me!"

"Certainly," he responded, dazed that this vision of a girl in a garden-party frock should have invaded his green wilderness. "But—'save you'? Er—what from?"

"Oh, that—that dreadful——"

She waved her absurd hand towards the object of her terror. The object, having walked leisurely for a few yards among the

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moon-daisies, dropped a mild head again to her cropping.

Contempt flashed from the Fisherman's grey eyes.

"Surely," he said, "you're not afraid of *cows?*"

"But this one was—going to run after me——"

"Pooh!" said the Fisherman. "She wouldn't touch you." Lifting his cap, he seemed about to turn away.

For the very first time in her ladyship's life the Butterfly had been snubbed—snubbed by a man; a great, hulking creature in rough tweed!

Holding her red-gold head so high in the air that it was almost on a level with his broad shoulder, she stood her ground and said very distinctly:

"I think you are—mistaken. So will you be good enough to walk with me as far as the gate? And please fetch me my parasol; I dropped it."

It lay like a pink, giant rose among the moon-daisies.

He strode across and picked it up for her.

The Butterfly, her vanity still a-quiver, determined that he should make further amends. Before they reached the gate he must tell her all about himself, just as her partners always did at dances.

She began very sweetly and shyly:

"Are you staying here?"

"As you see."

"Have you been down here long?"

"Not very long."

"I have been down a week," volunteered the Butterfly. As she walked along beside him the moon-daisies pattered and bowed against her flounces. "I find it very—quiet. Don't you?"

"Yes. I prefer to be quiet."

"A hint!" thought the Butterfly furiously. "A hint!" She ignored it and pursued: "I came down myself to be quiet. But"—here she flashed her really exquisite smile upon him—"being quiet all by oneself—is rather dull, I think."

To this he replied absolutely nothing.

The Butterfly shot an envenomed glance up at his face—clean-shaven, imperturbable. He shifted the strap of his fishing-basket.

"Are you," she asked, more sweetly than ever, "very fond of fishing?"

"Yes."

"Have you had good sport since you've been down?"

"Not particularly."

"Did you catch anything to-day?"

"No."

They had reached the gate, and he turned.

"Thank you for coming with me," said the discomfited Butterfly. "Good-evening."

"Good-bye," responded the Fisherman.

"Odious creature!" she exclaimed to herself. "I hope I shall never see him again! . . . I wonder whether he goes fishing every day? . . ."

* * * * *

He had been fishing in silence and solitude for many hours. It was a day too bright actually for any "sport," but it was always his joy to idle "between the green and the gold," steeped in content—hearing no sound but the drowsy murmur of the bee amidst the meadow-sweet that bordered his loved stream. Gilded gnats danced in a cloud about it, and suddenly a wild rose, its pink cup lying on the water, floated into sight and passed him, to be followed by another and another.

The Fisherman began to walk slowly upstream. In the willow-nook he came upon her—an Orange-tipped Butterfly, for her hat was hanging from a drooped bough, and a ray of the sunset was riotous in her red hair.

"Good-evening," he said.

"Good-bye," returned the Butterfly maliciously.

"No," he said, "I wanted to ask you something. I wish——"

At last, she thought, he wanted to know her name, and whether he might call, and—everything!

"What do you wish?"

"I wish that when you throw flowers into the water you wouldn't do it *above* where I'm fishing. It's enough to frighten away any salmon in the river—if there's one left. Do you mind?"

"Not at all," said the Butterfly, gulping down her wrath. "Have you caught anything to-day?"

"No."

"It seems a silly way of spending your time," she said, "fishing!"

"Many things *seem* silly," he responded, gravely regarding her. "How do you spend your time?"

"Oh!" responded the Butterfly lightly, "I—I frivol about and amuse myself."

"Do you enjoy that?"

"Yes," declared the Butterfly.

He looked at her steadily, almost kindly, and repeated: "Do you enjoy that?"

"Er—not *very* much," she owned softly.

"It seems a silly way of spending your time," he said, "frivolling about!"

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"I don't know how to do anything else," she answered rather sadly.

There was a pause, which she broke by saying:

"Do you think that if you taught me I might learn to fish?"

"No," growled the Fisherman. "No woman ever could—decently."

The Butterfly suppressed her amusement at this theory. She continued to look plaintively at him, and, removing as much as was humanly possible to remove of the coquetry from her manner, she suggested:

"Won't you even teach me how to tie flies?"

"Well," he conceded slowly, "perhaps—yes, I might do that."

* * * *

Because of his disapproving glance at the trailing lace and muslin which would catch and tear on the willow boughs, the Butterfly had packed away those gowns, to appear in a suit of severely-cut white drill—one of those simple little things that cost eight times as much as the frilliest vanity in Bond Street. Because he would not rise to coquetry, she met him in the frankest spirit of *camaraderie*.

"It's odd," she ventured—after a week of the lessons in fly-tieing, "that we can be such good friends, when we don't even know each other's names."

"Names aren't important," responded the Fisherman. "Except the names of salmon flies—how often must I tell you not to mix up the 'Colonel' with the 'Major'? And don't say 'Jack Scott' for 'Jock Scott.'"

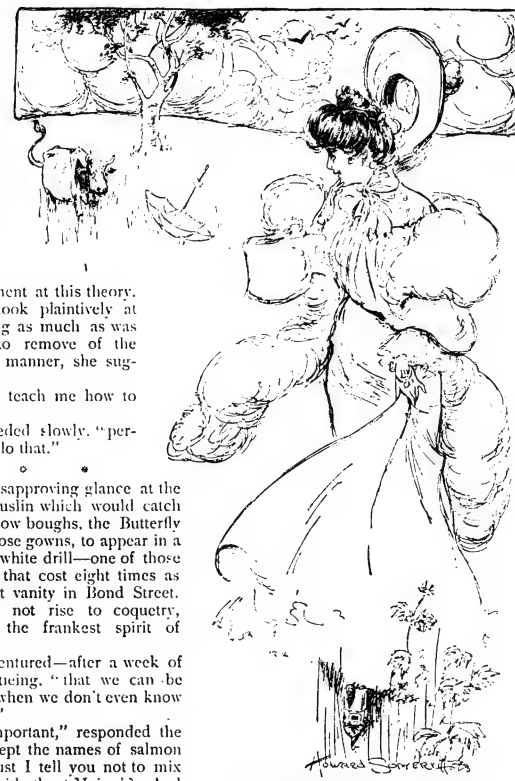
She corrected herself meekly.

"And this," she asked, picking up another gay mimic insect with death in the sting of it, "what's this one?"

"That with the red body and the golden pheasant topping? Rather gaudy, isn't it? I call it 'Garradge's Fancy.'"

"Garradge?" repeated the Butterfly. "Are you any relation to the Garradges of Lime Court, then?"

"I? No. None!" replied the Fisherman, and he swiftly turned the conversation back to talk of tail and wing and hackle, while her small fingers busied themselves with the bright feathers, the tinsel, and the silk from the inner pocket of his fly-book.



"But this one was—going to run after me—"

She grew to know every detail of that worn, leather-bound volume as well as she knew the grave alertness of the Fisherman's glance, the easy swing of his tweed-clad figure between the willows. But of his own affairs, whence he had come, whither he was going, she knew nothing at all.

"I'm leaving next week," he told her at last abruptly.

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"Leaving? Why?"

"Because my holiday's over. I've got to get back to my work."

"What?" she demanded eagerly. "What *is* your work?"

"Oh, nothing that would interest you," he answered with such finality that even the Butterfly did not dare to retort: "Nothing would interest me more."

On the last day she observed with some hesitation: "I suppose your work isn't in London, is it?"

"No," he replied, "it isn't."

"Then—then one isn't likely to meet you in town?"

He gave a short laugh. "Not if I can help it," he said.

"I forgot, you said you hated towns," observed the Butterfly, biting her lips. "I used to love—I mean I love them."

"Then I suppose you'll be glad to get back to them," said he.

She fluttered the leaves of the fly-book.

"You'll be glad, won't you?" he asked.

"I? Glad? Oh, yes," she laughed. "I shall be frightfully glad, of course. Look, the 'Garradge's Fancy' fly wants mending. The body has come all unfastened. I'll mend it, shall I?"

"I've got no more of that red silk," said the Fisherman.

"Then I must use something else," said she. She laughed again, put up her hand to her head and plucked out one of the red-gold threads of her hair. "Won't that do?"

"I suppose it's something of the same colour," he admitted without looking at her.

"There, then!" Deftly she wound it about the body of "Garradge's Fancy." Silence fell between them as she worked.

"That's done!" announced the Butterfly at last in her gayest tone. "Don't you think it's rather neat?"

"Moderately so."

"May it land you many a twenty-pounder!" she wished. "And '*when that you see remember me.*' Will you?"

"If I think of it," he said, sticking the mended fly into his book.

It was after the last flash of her white gown had disappeared behind the willows, that the Fisherman took the red-bodied "Fancy" out of his fly-book and fastened it very carefully, very tenderly, into the lining of his cap.

* * * * *

November found the Butterfly, after prolonged flights, first on the Moors and then in Paris, back at her bride-cake of a house in Park Lane. Its balconies were bare of geraniums, but great, ragged chrysanthemums, orange, gold, and coppery-red, filled its pretty drawing-room with their spice-strong scent.

The Butterfly, sitting among the chrysanthemums in a Forma tea-gown of many shades of brown, looked like a belated fritillary mourning for summer. All her friends noticed how wistful had grown the face under the red-gold curls. The man she had refused to marry so persistently imagined that at last she must be repenting of her obstinacy, and calling all powers of persuasion to his aid he renewed his suit.

The Butterfly encouraged it in sober earnest. "For nothing interesting," she told herself, "seems ever likely to happen again. I may as well get married 'and settle down,' as they call it. Perhaps people are happier when they 'settle down'——

"But how I wish something frightfully unsettling would happen!" declared the Butterfly, in a sudden reaction. "Why can't there be an *earthquake?*

The Fates, who possibly considered that they had been of late too lavish with their earthquakes, arranged, instead, a motor accident.

A crowded motor-omnibus, the Butterfly's own brougham, two hansoms, and a private car were splendidly involved in it; it took place during the fog, and in the muddy streak of road just opposite the Butterfly's front door. But when the screams of women, shouts of men, throbbing of machinery, stamping of horsehoofs, and shrilling of whistles had quieted down from a pandemonium to an opening for inquiries, it was found that after all nobody had been killed.

Indeed, the only casualty appeared to be that the *chauffeur* of the private car had been pitched head foremost to the pavement.

They carried him, unconscious, into the Butterfly's house—it was, by the way, the Butterfly's brougham that was responsible for the accident—and the housekeeper attended to him and sent for the doctor.

After her first thrill of relief that no harm had been done, the Butterfly relapsed once more into languor and melancholy.

"Her small ladyship will be my next patient in *this* house!" thought the doctor—who had known her from a child—as he looked in at the drawing-room on his way from the housekeeper's room, where the *chauffeur* was already recovering upon the sofa.

"The young man is as right as rain," he

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told her. "He was only stunned. He'll be able to get up and go presently."

"I wonder what I ought to give him!" pondered the Butterfly vaguely. "I never know!" The Indian judge's daughter generally arranged the Butterfly's "tips," and she was still away.

"I shouldn't offer this chap anything," the doctor advised her. "He'd resent it. You'll see him before he goes?"

"Oh, yes, I'll see him," she said listlessly. "I'll see him at six o'clock. I don't want to see anybody at all—but I've got some stupid people coming in at five."

(She was, in fact, expecting the man she had decided to marry.)

"That young chap," pursued the doctor, "must have a skull like a brickbat to have withstood that crash upon the pavement! Jove! And the funniest thing about the affair was——"

He explained to her the funniest thing about the affair.

It sent her ladyship (with a swish of silk, a flutter of red curls, a streaming wake of velvet tea-gown) flying off, post haste, to the housekeeper's room.

"You're hateful; you always were! You've the worst manners of any man in the world."

* * * * *

"My poor boy! My poor, poor, hurt boy!"

The Butterfly knelt on the floor beside the housekeeper's sofa, with both her hands clasping the dark-green cloth sleeve of the Fisherman.

"Don't, for goodness' sake!" he remonstrated, white-faced, but surly as ever. "Can't you see I'm—I'm——"

"You're better, aren't you?"

"Yes, I'm better. But," responded the

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Fisherman grimly. "I'm Lord Garradge's *chauffeur* all the same."

"Garradge!" she exclaimed. "Then *that* was why—but what does it matter?" (You cannot tell a man to his face that you know he is a gentleman.) "What do I care?"

"I care," retorted the Fisherman. "It's quite a good berth. Better than enlisting, which is all that's left now for youngest sons with no brains. I'm afraid I took some of the paint off your brougham. It's the first time I ever had a smash. Sorry it should have happened just outside your house. And I didn't mean to bore you with an interview; I was going to cut away the minute before you came in."

"You knew," she gasped, "that it was my house?"

"Oh, do you suppose I didn't know all about you, that time down in the country? I recognised you at once," he explained testily. "I'd come across your picture scores of times in the fashion-papers the Garradge girls leave in the car. Well! I shall have to go and attend to her now."

"Her?" queried the Butterfly sharply. "Her?"

"Yes, the car."

He rose, one hand to his bandaged head. The Butterfly sprang up and stood before him.

"You can't go yet. You mustn't go yet!" she interposed excitedly. "I can't—let you go. You know why. It's no use pretending. You said 'frivolling about' was a silly amusement. Oh, it is! it is! Take me away from it. Take me to Norway, or Canada, or somewhere where it's all open air, and fishing, and—and like last summer; take me back to it! You know you really want to, at the bottom of your—your *disgustingly* obstinate heart!" she cried, as he stared at her. "Yes, you do. Or—why did you treasure up that salmon fly I tied for you with my own hair? Why did you take it out of your book, and keep it always inside your different caps?"

He reddened furiously.

"How did you know? What—what makes you think so?" he responded in savage tones. They did not frighten the Butterfly.

"You fell on your head just now, didn't you? And the hook was driven right into it. Oh, my poor boy. The doctor took it out and showed me——"

From the coffee-coloured lace of her tea-gown she detached the red-bodied "Garradge's Fancy." She held it out to him. The golden-pheasant's feather was tipped with blood.

"There! Now what have you to say for yourself? Aren't you ashamed——"

"I was ashamed," admitted the Fisherman slowly, "when I thought I was within an ace of making a fool of myself over an utterly frivolous and heartless woman who tried to get round me—as I knew she'd got round dozens of other men—merely for her own amusement. I shouldn't have been very proud of knuckling under to a flighty little Society flirt."

"I *wasn't* flirting!"

"Not even at first?" suggested the Fisherman imperturbably.

"*Oh!*" the Butterfly almost screamed in her temper. "You're hateful; you always were! You've the worst manners of any man in the world. You've no brains; you said so! You're a most clumsy *chauffeur;* in fact, you're no good at anything! Not even at being a Fisherman! Now, *are* you?" She stamped a microscopic bronze slipper. "All the time you were down there—— Tell me! Did you ever catch a single thing?"

He stooped, made a snatch. He caugh her up in his arms with a laughing cry:

"Gaffed!"

THE CASHIER.

'Tis mine to handle gold galore
And with a ready hand disburse
Each day a thousand pounds and more,
Nor dole it forth from slender purse.

I give alike to rich and poor,
No applicant I turn away,
I have no need to lock my door,
Or guard my wealth from day to day.

I care no jot for power or rank,
Nor am I rich myself, you know
I am cashier in a bank,
That's how I make the money go.

E. Le. B. M.

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This dog was tried and condemned to death for murder at Delemont in the canton of Soleure, Switzerland.

PICTURE . . PARAGRAPHS.

The Editor is Always Pleased to Purchase from Readers Photographs Suitable for Use in This Feature.

Pictures Should be Accompanied by a Short Description.

A DOG TRIED FOR MURDER.

THE above dog has been sentenced to be shot by the court sitting at Delemont in Switzerland.

Two men named Scherrer were charged with the murder of a wealthy farmer. Their dog had torn the man's throat, and he was also severely wounded with a knife.

The two men pleaded that the crime was committed by the dog.

Finally the maximum penalty of the Swiss law was passed on the men, and the dog was shot.

THE TSAR'S SWIMMING BATH.

HAVING been ordered by Dr. Hirsch, his physician, to spend an hour or more in the water every day, Nicholas II. carried out his medical man's decree throughout last summer in the palatial swimming bath situated in the grounds of the Peterhof Palace.

Though the Tsar has the reputation of being an excellent swimmer, he never likes to be out of his depth, and so the water of the bath is in no place deeper than five feet.

This magnificent swimming bath is consecrated to the private use of the Tsar of Russia, and is situated in the grounds of the Peterhof Palace.

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Photo *Gordon E. Corbould.*

A typical tree in British Columbia. The man lying across the tree is over six feet high.

A GIANT OF THE FOREST.

THERE is no finer timber in the world than that of British Columbia, and that of the adjoining State of Washington.

The fir and cedar trees often attain enormous size, and thirty thousand feet of lumber has been cut from a single fir tree. The trees are usually cut off about eight to twelve feet from the ground by men standing on spring boards let into the tree.

The size of the tree in the picture above can be imagined when it is remembered that the man lying across the aperture is no weakling, but a sturdy lumberman over six feet in height.

In the neighbouring island of Vancouver the railway is cut through a forest of enormous trees, and is hemmed in for miles by tall cedars and giant Douglas pines. Strangers travelling on the line are always struck by this particular feature of it.

Now that timber in Eastern Canada and the United States is getting scarce, the lumber merchants are looking westward for their supplies, and the forests of Vancouver constitute immense riches.

AN AUSTRALIAN DUST-STORM.

A GRAND and appalling spectacle was provided recently for the inhabitants of Narandera, N.S.W., when a phenomenal dust-storm swept over the town.

The day had been hot and sultry, and towards six o'clock a huge bank of dun-coloured clouds was noticed on the western horizon. These crowds wreathed and curled in gigantic coloured masses, wheeling and advancing like the vanward columns of some aerial army.

From bright gold the clouds deepened to a heavy purple, and thence to inky black; the terrible magnificence of the spectacle oppressed spectators with a feeling akin to awe. All the people of Narandera turned out to watch the wonderful sight. The very oldest inhabitant had never seen anything like it in his life, and was unable to put forward any plausible theory to account for or explain the physical wonder.

In a short time the town was wrapped in darkness. Fortunately the storm was high in the air, and thus there was not the disagreeable dust which is experienced from an ordinary dust-storm.

In about a quarter of an hour the storm had passed, leaving a silvery sheen in the atmosphere, through which the sun could be looked at during the whole of the following day. The people of Narandera were deeply stirred by this tremendous storm, and it formed the sole topic of conversation for some time.

"Could an artist have pictured the scene upon canvas," said a writer in the *Narandera Ensign*, commenting on the occurrence, "his fame would be world-wide."

Photo *Carl T. Dupdale.*

A tremendous dust-storm in Narandera, N.S.W

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A NOBLE BEARD.

In Eastern countries, an old man possessing a long, noble beard is greatly respected.

This being so, Mr. José Ronchetti, of Ormavassa, near Novara, in Italy, would be almost an object of veneration were he to emigrate to the East.

His beard is so long as almost to be an incumbrance, for it reaches to his feet, although he is a man six feet high; and unless it is cut periodically it trails along the ground.

It goes without saying that a beard of this size requires a great deal of care and attention. Naturally its owner is proud of it, for it does not fall to the lot of every man to have a beard reaching to his feet.

Although Mr. Ronchetti is now approaching the evening of his days, he is still a fine-looking man, with an upright carriage which many youths of twenty might envy.

He is a familiar sight in the streets of Ormavassa, striding along with his venerable beard flowing in the breeze. His fellow-townsmen have the greatest respect for Mr. Ronchetti, who is an object of universal esteem.

Photo Adolf Croß.

Mr. José Ronchetti, of Ormavassa, in Italy, whose beard reaches to his feet.

THE ROYAL MAGAZINE.

Photo Je Sais Tout.

A remarkable picture of an unhappy guinea-pig which has been attracted by a curious cup-shaped plant, and poisoned by its juice.

A DEATH-DEALING PLANT.

In the Philadelphia Vivarium there is on view a plant which preys on small animals.

Part of the plant is cup-shaped, and this portion of it contains a strong-smelling juice.

The juice acts something after the fashion of a fly-paper; that is to say, it attracts the small animal and lures it to its doom in the same way as the sticky substance on a fly-paper fills the fly with such a terrible hunger that it unwarily entangles its feet, and sooner or later ends its existence.

Small animals, such as the guinea-pig in the illustration, rush to the plant directly they smell the juice it contains, but this juice is so powerful that upon getting near it the unhappy beasts are poisoned by the fumes it gives off.

It is difficult to say whether the plant derives any benefit from the animals it kills in this manner.

Scientists seem doubtful on the subject.

As regards the sun-dew and similar flowers, the blood of the insects they catch is absorbed, and helps to nourish the plant.

It is uncertain, however, whether the case of the exhibit in the Philadelphia Vivarium is on all fours with that of the sun-dew.

In any case, small animals would do well to avoid it.

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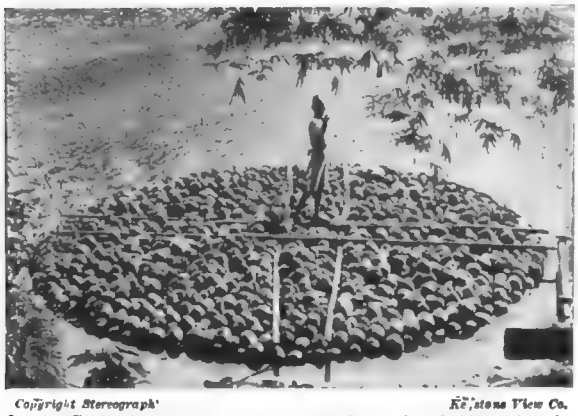

Copyright Stereograph *Keystone View Co.*
In the Philippines, cocoanuts are massed together, held in place by long canes, and floated down to the place of shipment.

A COCOANUT RAFT.

THE natives of the Philippines have a most ingenious method of transporting cocoanuts by water.

The nuts are first massed together so as to form a species of raft, and are held in place by long canes.

A native stands in the middle of the raft, and skilfully navigates it with a long pole, in much the same manner as a punt is controlled.

The cocoanut itself is of the greatest value to the natives of the countries in which the cocoanut-tree is found.

The fruit grows in clusters of about fifteen, and several groups of these clusters may be seen, in various stages of ripeness, on the same tree.

To get the milk of the fruit the native makes a hole in the largest of the three round black scars at one end of the shell. This is because experience has taught him that the largest scar is always the softest, and, consequently, an incision may be made in it more easily than in either of the other two.

It is an interesting sight to watch the untutored savage ascending the cocoanut-tree in pursuit of the nuts.

The native takes a piece of tough creeper and passes it round the tree trunk. He grasps the ends in either hand, and braces his feet against the tree. Jerking the loop of creeper upwards as he goes, he skips nimbly up the bare trunk in less time than one would require to say "Jack Robinson."

A GIANT CABBAGE.

A CERTAIN English gardener has grown this enormous cabbage.

Comparing the phenomenal vegetable with the people behind it, it will be seen at once that the cabbage is about half the height of its owners, who, with expressions of modest pride on their faces, form the background.

It is interesting to know that the cabbage was raised from ordinary seed, and at one time appeared to be just the same as all the other cabbages that in monotonous rows filled the garden in which this giant specimen grew.

The owner of the garden had no theory to account for the dimensions of the vegetable.

"It's a good garden for cabbages," he said, "but then it's a good garden for parsnips too, so that's nothing to go by."

Photo *Rogers & Co.*
An enormous cabbage. Comparison with the bystanders will show that it is half as high as they are.

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BILLY-AND THE BUSINESS!

How a Little Boy Restored the Fallen Fortunes of his Father's House.

By
A. Demain Grangt.

William Patrick Borrington sat on the floor with his face against the bars of the nursery fender, staring disconsolately into the fire. Many strange and untoward things had happened to him of late. For one thing, his nurse—his beloved Nanna—had vanished, and in her place a lean, gawky maiden, of somewhat slatternly appearance, had clumsily ministered to his wants.

Then again, his adored 'farver' and 'muvver' had not been to see him so often as usual, and when they did come they were both so oddly silent and sad-looking, and not a bit like what they used to be. Only once, when he wanted some more milk, and for some unaccountable reason there wasn't any, his mother had seized him in her arms, and kissed him and laughed over him in the funniest way imaginable.

It was all very queer and incomprehensible to Billy.

And downstairs, in his study, William Patrick Borrington, senior, sat and puffed moodily at his pipe, the while he stared gloomily at sundry letters and papers piled on the desk before him—sat and stared, until a small, white hand was laid gently on his shoulder, a soft cheek was pressed lovingly against his own, and a well-known voice whispered: "Oh, Will, if it wasn't for Billy!"

The truth of the matter was, that the House of Borrington was tottering upon its foundations. A big Combine and a small private business had been pitted against one another, with the inevitable result that the small business had gone under. The hardly accumulated savings of years had been drawn upon to stave off the end, which now must surely come.

Thus it was that Billy lacked many things to which he had long been accustomed, and that the lean, gawky maiden held her uncomfortable sway where formerly the stout and motherly Nanna had reigned supreme.

One day Billy was playing with his soldiers on the study floor—a coveted privilege lately granted to him to make up for many others which had necessarily been withdrawn. His father and mother were sitting side by side in front of the fire, their hands clasped under cover of the *Financial Times*.

They appeared to have forgotten that he was in the room (leaden soldiers fall softly on a thick-pile carpet, and the exigencies of battle had drawn him under the table), and presently they began to speak of the trouble which oppressed them, a subject they had hitherto carefully avoided in his presence.

Much of what they said was unintelligible to Billy, but one or two facts stood out with sufficient clearness to be grasped by him. It would seem that a certain obnoxious person, "Combine" by name, was the cause of his

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(Billy's) present discomfiture; that he had in some mysterious manner "cornered" something or somebody; and, moreover, that he had actually had the audacity to establish himself in farver's very own office in the City. What else he had done, Billy could not quite make out, but he gathered that this Mister Combine had "hit" and grievously injured those nearest and dearest to him, and his young blood boiled with anger at the mere thought.

"If only the others had stood by me I could have fought him," he heard his father say.

"Ah, yes!" his mother answered softly. "Things might have ended very differently for us then."

Billy pondered the matter deeply, as he lay awake in his cot that night, and all at once a great and glorious idea came to him.

He had often been to his father's office, in Gresham Street, in the old, prosperous days, with his mother, or Nanna. Why should he not go there now, and beard this wicked ogre in his den? True, it was a very long way, and he would not have Mumsie or Nanna to stop the 'bus and buy his ticket for him. Then, supposing he reached the office safely, might not the ogre strongly object to being bearded? Ogres, he knew, had a penchant for devouring little boys; and he remembered this one could "hit hard."

Beyond doubt the enterprise was a bold one, and attended with grave risks. But Billy was a courageous little soul, and a proved warrior to boot. Had he not fought and vanquished the Jones' boy, who was two years older than himself, and ever so much bigger!

The next day, while taking his morning walk in Kensington Gardens with Sarah, the lean, gawky damsel before mentioned, he contrived to give her the slip, and, dodging behind the bushes as he ran, made his way by devious paths to the Lancaster Gate.

Here a difficulty presented itself. One, two, and three 'buses passed him, and he could not make up his mind which he ought to take. Finally, he decided to board the next one that came along, and chance its being the right one.

He managed to stop it very effectively by standing in the middle of the road and waving his arms, semaphore fashion. Then, with the assistance of the conductor, he clambered up the steps and took a seat inside.

The other passengers looked at him curiously, but Billy was all unconscious of their amused glances. As a matter of fact, he was too much occupied with retaining his balance on the edge of the high seat to pay any attention to them. Presently the conductor came round, and Billy explained, as well as he could, that he wanted to go to his father's office in Gresham Street.

"Gresh'm Street," said the conductor; "that's near the Bank."

"Ess," Billy agreed stolidly.

"Tuppence," said the man, fingering a roll of tickets suggestively.

Here was a predicament! Twopence may seem the merest trifle, or a sum beyond the dreams of avarice, as you look at it. It all depends upon the point of view. Billy possessed exactly one penny, a piece of string, and two small peppermint hearts. He held these out hopefully.

The conductor eyed them with a dubious grin.

"The penny's all right, but the rest ain't 'xactly legal tender," he observed facetiously.

Billy slid down from his seat. "Den I will get out and walk," he said stoutly.

A murmur of protest came from the other occupants of the 'bus, and with a muttered "Bless 'is little 'eart" a stout old lady in the corner produced the balance of the fare, and handed it to the conductor.

"Tank you," said Billy, with a heavenly smile, as he wriggled back into his seat.

The rest of the journey passed uneventfully. Most of the passengers got out at the next stopping place, and the newcomers, beyond glancing at him casually, took little or no notice of him. They probably concluded that he had been placed in charge of the conductor, as that functionary from time to time thrust in his head with the satisfying announcement that they were "gettin' along," and the assurance that there was "no cause fer to worrit," as he would "fix" him all right when they reached their destination. All of which was, as it was intended to be, most comforting to Billy.

When they reached the Bank, the conductor was as good as his word, and Billy found himself trotting along by the side of a tall policeman, and the cynosure of many eyes. Arrived at the well-known doorway, through which he had so often passed with his mother, Billy, who was a well-bred little fellow, politely thanked the policeman and walked in, leaving the officer of the law staring amazedly at a knotted piece of string and a broken peppermint heart.

Up the familiar stairs Billy passed joyously. For the moment he had quite forgotten that it

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was not his "dear farver" he had come to see, but an exceedingly wicked ogre, who "cornered" people, and who could, and did, "hit hard." It was only when he reached the glass door where he had been wont to knock so light-heartedly, that he realised the awesome truth.

On it was painted in thick, black letters:

"The
United Paper
Supply Co.
Ltd.

Mr.
Silas B. Packer,
Manager."

As he was staring blankly at this legend, the door was suddenly opened, and a tall, gaunt man, with fiercely upturned moustache, dashed out, almost upsetting poor Billy in his headlong flight.

"Hullo, my little man!" he cried, grabbing him by the shoulder to steady him.

"The penny's all right, but the rest ain't 'xactly legal tender," he observed facetiously.

"Tank you," said Billy, recovering his dignity and his balance with difficulty. "Are you Mister Combine?"

"Eh, what?"

"Are you Mister Combine?"

The man smiled and shook his head. "Don't know him," he said. "You'd better inquire in there." He waved his hand towards the printed legend, and then turned and sped along the passage.

Billy drew a deep breath, pushed open the door, which was slightly ajar, and marched boldly into the ogre's castle. He found himself in a small, box-like compartment, formed by a partition of wood and glass, beyond which he could hear a curious scratching sound and the low murmur of voices. This partition had not been there in his father's time, and while he was wondering how to proceed a deep voice behind him said: "Well, young 'un, what is it?"

Billy started round and found himself face to face with a tall, lanky youth, with an immense shock of bright red hair, who was standing between him and the door by which he had just entered.

"Oh — if you please — I want to see Mister Combine," Billy faltered.

"Mister oo?" the youth demanded.

"Mister Combine," Billy repeated.

"Dunno 'im," said the youth. Then an idea appeared to strike him. "Wot's yer name?" he asked.

"Will'm Patrick Borr'ngton," said Billy proudly.

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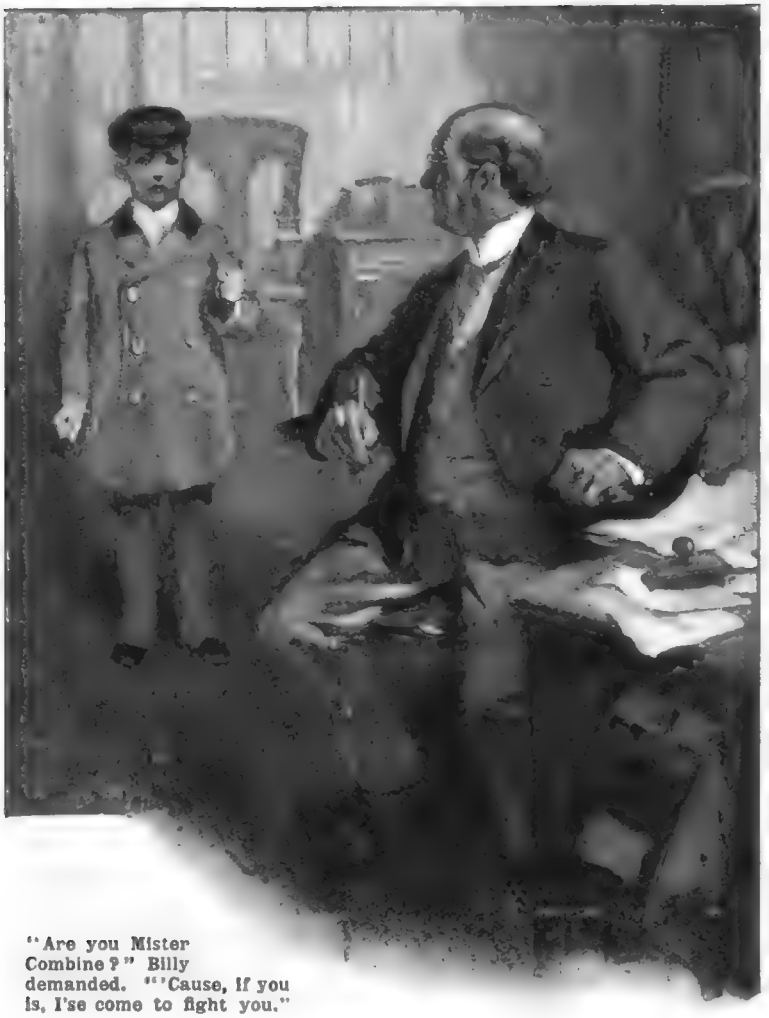

"Are you Mister Combine?" Billy demanded. "'Cause, if you is, I'se come to fight you."

The youth stared at him for a moment, and then dived round the end of the partition. Whereupon there arose a confused sound of whispering, during which Billy heard his name repeated by different voices in varying accents of surprise. A lengthy silence followed.

Presently the red-haired youth returned to him. "Mister Packer 'll see yer, if you'll step this way," he announced grinning.

Billy stepped that way—which was through the door, and along the passage for some distance—and a few moments later, was ushered into the august presence of the Manager of the United Paper Supply Co. Ltd.

Mr. Silas B. Packer, a stout, benevolent-looking old gentleman, with flowing side-whiskers and a clean-shaven lip and chin, was engaged in making a memorandum as Billy entered the room.

"Pray be seated, Mr. Borrington," he murmured, glancing over his shoulder. Then, as he caught sight of the small figure standing in the middle of the vast expanse of carpet between the desk and the door, he dropped his pen, swung round in his chair, and, hastily adjusting a pair of gold-rimmed spectacles, stared in unfeigned astonishment.

"Bless my soul!" he cried. "They told me that a young gentleman of the name of Borrington wished to see me, but I scarcely expected ——" He paused, and a whimsical smile puckered up his face.

"I'se Will'm Patrick Borr'ngton," said Billy gravely.

"Oh—the deuce you are!" laughed the old gentleman. "And what can I do for you, eh?"

"Are you Mister Combine?" Billy demanded. "'Cause, if you is, I'se come to fight you."

"*Fight* me!" gasped Mr. Packer.

"Ess," said Billy, doubling up his fists.

"But—whatever for?" the old gentleman asked in amazement.

"'Cause you'se hit my farver very hard, and hurted him," Billy answered sternly.

"Good Lord!" exclaimed Mr. Packer. "What *is* the child talking about!"

"You'se put him in a corner, and you'se taken away my Nanna, and my pony, and—and lots of other things," Billy explained.

"Oh," said Mr. Packer thoughtfully.

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"And you'se—you'se made my muvver cry," Billy added tremulously.

There was a short silence. Then Mr. Packer rose, and laid his hand on Billy's shoulder.

"I think I understand, my little man," he said gently. "But it was not I who did those things you speak of. You will believe that, won't you, Billy?"

Billy looked up into the kindly, wrinkled face bent over his, and a child's intuition told him that this was no wicked ogre, but a soft-hearted old gentleman who understood and loved little boys such as he.

"Ess," he said simply, "I b'leeve dat."

For a moment they stood hand in hand, the Manager of the world-famous Paper Supply Co. Ltd., and Billy, aged seven; and then Mr. Packer drew him gently to the wonderful revolving chair, and, sitting down in it, lifted him up on to his knee.

"And now, tell me all about it," he said smiling.

Billy poured forth his story as well as he was able, relating how he had overheard his father and mother talking together before the study fire, and recounting the many changes which had recently taken place in his once comfortable home. Mr. Packer listened gravely, and as the narrative proceeded a certain mistiness came into his eyes, and he coughed once or twice rather huskily. He had a little grandson at home whose hair curled over his forehead in exactly the same way as Billy's did. Suppose that he—Mr. Packer's cough grew troublesome.

"Farver couldn't fight Mr. Combine alone—bein' hitted so hard—so I fought I'd help him," Billy concluded.

"Hum—yes," said Mr. Packer, blowing his nose. "Your father was—er—rather handicapped. But—hum—yes—we will see what can be done to mend matters. In the meantime, I will send somebody home with you, and"—here Mr. Packer grew a trifle nervous in manner—"you needn't mention that you've seen me, Billy."

Billy gave the desired promise gladly. He would have promised, and given, much more (had he possessed it) to this kind-hearted old gentleman, who, he imagined, was about to set forth and annihilate the offending Mr. Combine in single combat. As it was, he bestowed upon him a kiss and his one remaining peppermint heart, with which gifts Mr. Packer seemed wonderfully content.

After Billy had departed in the company of the red-haired youth, Mr. Packer turned to his desk, took up his pen, and drawing a fresh sheet of paper towards him, wrote a lengthy communication to the chiefs of the great Paper Combine, in which he darkly hinted that they might do worse than endeavour to secure the invaluable services of their late plucky antagonist, Mr. William Patrick Berrington.

* * * * *

Billy never quite knew what happened as the outcome of his visit to Mr. Packer. How the ogre had been slain or otherwise rendered innocuous, he could not tell. But this much he did know: that his dear "farver" and "muvver" were once more happy; that everything the heart of a small boy could desire was showered upon him lavishly, as it had not been before; and that he had got his beloved Nanna back again.

And now when he goes to the office in Gresham Street (as he often does), he always pauses outside the glass door, on which is printed in bold, black letters:

"THE UNITED PAPER SUPPLY CO. LTD.

Silas B. Packer, } Joint
William Patrick Borrington, } Managers."

\+ \+ \+ \+ \+ \+ \+

"UNCLE."

He holds medals for jumping, for running, for golf,
While with trophies his shelves fairly groan;
Yet he's podgy and short, and I'm sure that his weight
Must be well over seventeen stone!

"How on earth did he manage to get them?" you say;
Well, the mystery soon disappears
When you hear he's called Isaacs, and learn that he lives
At the sign of the Three Golden Spheres!

Charles Vivian.

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No. XXVIII.—THE BOMBARDMENT OF ALEXANDRIA.

From the Narrative of Mr. Israel Harding, V.C., Chief Gunner, R.N. (Retired).

As Told to Walter Wood.

In his dispatch of July 14th, 1882, Admiral Sir F. Beauchamp Seymour, Commander-in-Chief on the Mediterranean Station, briefly described the most thrilling incident of the bombardment of Alexandria and one of the finest acts for which the Victoria Cross was ever awarded. "Captain Hotham, of the *Alexandra*," he wrote, "has specially brought to my notice a deed of valour performed by Mr. Israel Harding, the gunner of that ship, who probably saved many lives by lifting and placing in a tub of water a ten-inch shell with a burning fuse which had passed through the ship's side and lodged on the main deck." For that act Mr. Harding was at once promoted chief gunner, and was afterwards awarded the Victoria Cross. The bombardment began early on the morning of July 11th, 1882, and within eleven hours the city was in ruins through the terrible fire of the British naval guns, at ranges varying from 1000 to 4000 yards. The British loss was remarkably slight, but the Egyptians had nearly 2000 killed and wounded.

The man is what the boy was—which is another way of saying that the boy is the father of the man. I was born to the sea and bred to danger, so that when in after years I did that thing of which people have spoken so much—and far more than it deserves to be talked about—I acted without a thought of any recognition whatsoever, or that I was doing anything beyond my duty.

I am something of a veteran now, past my three-score-and-ten years, and more than two decades have gone since I heard the crashing of the guns at Alexandria; but I can say as truly now as I have asserted constantly, that I do not consider that I did anything whatever extraordinary. The world has been pleased to think differently, and I have become resigned to the world's way of looking at the matter—but not accustomed even yet to the wonderful stories which people have told concerning me, and the still more startling pictures which artists have drawn of me and my achievement.

I have been made to do the most grotesque and impossible things, not the least marvellous being that of getting a 10-inch shell into a pail which could not hold it—a trick of which a conjuror might be proud; and so I am going to tell you what I actually did on that famous day when big gun flashed against big gun at Alexandria, when armoured battleships tried conclusions with powerful land forts, and repeated the triumphs of Algiers and Navarino.

The bombardment came to me as a matter of course, for I have the blood of sailors and fighting ancestors in me—and I was born on Trafalgar Day in 1833. That means something surely to a British sailor. My father was Queen's pilot at Portsmouth for many years, and my paternal grandfather was a Portsmouth King's pilot, while my mother's father was a master mariner. It all counts, don't you think? At any rate it counted with me. Then, as for my upbringing—as a small boy I enlarged my knowledge of the alphabet by using a bit of stick on the sands not far from the spot where Nelson embarked for his last great fight at sea. I continued my education at the Bethel and at a private school, where I was taught navigation, until I was fourteen. I was then apprenticed to a pilot. My father at that time was master of H.M. steam vessel *Echo*, and I began my career of forty years

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in the Royal Navy as a cabin boy in that quaint ship.

Almost at once I was plunged into an exciting experience, which was of immense service to me in after-life, because it was discipline that hardened me to danger. H.M.S. *Sphinx* was stranded at the back of the Isle of Wight, and we with other ships went to help her. One of the assisting cutters was capsized, and several men were drowned. I had many narrow escapes myself, as I went to and from the wreck whenever I had the chance during the four months it took us to get the ship afloat and into Portsmouth.

In May, 1849, I joined H.M.S. *Arrogant*, and served in her until 1853, and then joined H.M.S. *Excellent*, the Naval Gunnery School at Portsmouth. It fell to my duty to go with others to test a gun which was mounted in H.M.S. *Skylark*, the target being an old wooden frigate. It was a rifled weapon, quite a new invention, and nobody could tell what sort of tricks it would play, so, after the gun was laid, everyone was sent either below or into a boat alongside, for fear of accidents. That was before the age of electrical appliances, and the gun was fired with a long lanyard reaching to the boat on the off side of the ship. Everything had gone so well that it was meant, after the next round, to keep us all in our proper stations. The handspikemen, however—myself and three others—remained at the gun to keep the training on till the very last moment before firing. We had just time to pop down the fore-hatch when the gun was fired.

Then a most astounding thing happened—the weapon burst! The muzzle and chase went over the side, and one half of the cascabel flew over the bow, cutting the foremast in two, and bringing it crashing down above our heads; the other half passed through the funnel, cutting through the mainmast, and bringing that down, too; then it passed over the stern.

It was a remarkable and unexpected accident, and, but for the fact that we were all below, the loss of life would have been very heavy. As it was, not a man was hurt—but how different a story if the disaster had occurred with the next round, when faith in the rifled freak would have been fully established!

I made my first acquaintance with war at the bombardment of Sveaborg in 1855, when I was serving my second year in the Baltic, and that was another very useful bit of training for the bombardment of Alexandria. While serving in H.M.S. *Alexandra* in 1882, we were carrying out the usual work of the British Fleet in those days and those waters—policing the Mediterranean. Affairs were pretty critical in Egypt, and we were constantly on the watch for trouble.

On Sunday, April 30th, we were quietly anchored at Corfu, expecting the usual inspection and service, but instead the ships unmoored and steamed out to sea, making for Suda Bay in Candia. This sudden movement showed that something was in the wind, especially as the admiral had shifted his flag from the *Alexandra* to the *Invincible*, and sailed for Alexandria. We learnt that Arabi Pasha was the cause of the mischief, and he put himself into a position of enormous strength—so strong that he felt he could defy even the British ships of war. He was a masterful man, and made himself a master, too, and a dictator. Earthworks and batteries were being constructed, and our admiral demanded that they should be removed, threatening to bombard Alexandria if he were disobeyed.

The work continued, and our chief kept his word.

He was very precise in his plans, and promised to open fire on the Tuesday, July 11th. Our greatest fear then was that something would happen to prevent him from keeping his vow, a fear so great that when it was rumoured that a number of Egyptian officers, who had come in a steam launch from the shore, were suing for peace, many prayers were uttered for them—but directed to the wrong quarter. We thought they wanted peace, and condemned them for interfering busybodies and spoil-sports.

For many reasons that quiet July night off the coast of the land of the Pharaohs was a memorable one. There was a subdued excitement which affected and possessed everybody. Would there really be fighting? Would the Egyptians cave in at the last moment and disappoint all of us who wanted a fight? These and a hundred other questions were asked and eagerly discussed, but in the very middle of the night they vanished from consideration, for the pipe went, "Up anchor," and we knew what that meant—bombardment. Then the bugles sounded for action, and every officer and man went to his station, full of confidence and courage. Each captain had been supplied by the admiral with a copy of the order of battle, and I daresay that in the solemn darkness these were scanned by many an anxious eye.

Even as we steamed slowly and majestically on, cleared for action, there was the fear

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that at the last moment the enemy would abandon their forts and guns and let us have a bloodless victory; but as daylight broke we plainly saw that they were determined to try the test of battle. It was now that the order was given to load our guns with common shell.

So that you may have a clear idea of the fight, let me sketch a very short general outline of it. The Commander-in-Chief made two attacks: one by the *Sultan*, *Superb* and *Alexandra* on the northern face of Ras-el-Teen, supported by the fire from the after-turret of the *Inflexible*, anchored off the entrance of the Corvette Pass, thus enfilading the lighthouse batteries; the other by the *Invincible*, *Monarch* and *Penelope* from inside the reefs, helped by the fire of the *Inflexible's* foremost turret and the *Téméraire*, which was near the Boghaz, or chief pass leading to Alexandria Harbour. The *Helicon* and *Condor* were repeating ships, and the *Beacon*, *Bittern*, *Cygnet*, and *Decoy* were employed during the day according to orders.

My own ship, the *Alexandra*, led the van, the *Superb* and *Sultan* following. We steamed slowly along in front of the forts, and as we did so the officers of divisions pointed out each fort to the captains of the guns, especially cautioning them to aim only at these points. Nothing, you see, was to be left to chance. There had been plenty of time to prepare a programme, and now there was to be no excuse for not carrying out that programme efficiently.

We had got our anchors up at four o'clock; now it was seven, and three hours of tense expectation were followed by the thrilling and gladly-welcomed signal from the *Invincible* to us, the van ship, to begin the battle. Almost instantly one of our main battery guns crashed and sent its shell across the still waters towards Fort Curostos.

It was a wonderful sensation to feel that we had actually, from our own ship, opened the battle, and then to watch and wait for the enemy's reply. Even yet the flag might flutter down in token of surrender; but there was no reply of any sort for several minutes. This uncertainty would never do; our Commander-in-Chief must know exactly what the purpose of the Egyptians was, and so a second shot was fired, a solemn crash and boom and challenge from our armoured sides, and a big shot's dull roar across the placid waters.

There was now no need to wonder what the enemy's intention was—he meant to fight, and to fight to the death. From turrets, barbettes, main and central batteries, and conning-towers, watching eyes saw lines of vivid flashes and belching of smoke from battery and earthwork, and listening ears soon heard the accompanying thunder of the ordnance. It was a swift and almost magic change from perfect peace to the very hell of war; for as soon as the shore roared back defiance every gun in the fleet that could be brought to bear was discharged, and the forts burst into simultaneous fire and thunder.

Each ship fired independently, each captain of a gun aimed for a certain mark, each gun's crew set hard to work in this contest of pounding to see who could pound the hardest, and each ship's company strove to score a first place in marksmanship. Round and about us elongated and spherical projectiles hissed and screamed, some falling considerably short of the ships and others whistling and crashing through their rigging and cutting away portions of the running gear.

To me, brought up in the old school, which was practically a continuation of Nelson's navy, accustomed as I had been during the Russian War to fight with the same sort of muzzle-loading weapon that won for us Trafalgar, it was marvellous and fascinating to observe the quickness of our heavy breech-loading fire, and to know that our cannon-ading was the heaviest in naval history.

If this was the feeling of myself and others who were in the thick of the fighting, able to see only part of the bombardment, what must it have been to the crews of the merchant-men which were anchored out of range and witnessed the whole of the struggle? They expressed their feelings in rounds and rounds of excited cheering, just as spectators might applaud a thrilling play.

The shot and shell which crashed against our armour broke up; but those which struck the weaker portions of the ship penetrated and did a lot of mischief. Our own practice, as we could see from time to time when the smoke cleared, was deadly and demoralising. Every shot seemed to strike home, and forts were shattered and gunners destroyed in a way that showed the utter hopelessness of resistance. But the Egyptians had warmed to their work, and their fire was becoming very accurate.

We in the *Alexandra* were in the very thick of things, and had just as much excitement as I, for one, could carry, and as Gunner I was here, there, and everywhere, particularly about the magazines, and that is exciting duty enough when you know that at any moment a shell may come and explode your powder and sky you in fragments.

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We in the *Alexandra* were in the very thick of things.

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It is the commonest of commonplaces to say of British troops and sailors that they went into action as steadily as if they had been drilling or parading; but at the bombardment of Alexandria this was literally the case. You could not have supposed from the demeanour of officers and men that they were about to enter upon a struggle which would assuredly mean to some of them the loss of the number of their mess.

Before the battle itself we had concerts in the fleets, and nervous people cannot play and sing as we did both. Then we had little lectures, too—short, brisk discourses on the topics of the moment. Of these the one I best remember was delivered by our excellent Commander Thomas, whose subject was: "What is a Crisis?" If Arabi had heard the lecture, and still more, if he had listened to the comments on it, he would, I doubt not, have remarked gloomily: "This is one for me, anyway," because discourse and criticism had some remarkably free allusions to the prime mover of the mischief.

That spirit of cheerfulness and indifference was maintained throughout the action. Bear in mind that, fighting as we were fighting, only one side of the ship could fire at a time. This meant that, as we steamed along the forts, half the men, those on the side of the ship which was not engaged, had no fighting to do. And how do you suppose they employed their time? In playing cards!

Yes, it is actually true that while the guns on the other side of the ship belched death and crashed and thundered, these men unconcernedly amused themselves. They did that until the ship turned round and so brought their own guns into action. Then they sprang to their stations and blazed away, but not before they had handed over their cards to the powder-grimed men, whose hot and smoking weapons were taking a short rest.

I do not think that if I spoke pages I could give you a better idea than this circumstance affords of the perfect coolness and assurance of our men at Alexandria. To play cards while the ship is shivering with the crash of her artillery, when there is such a roar and racket that the very hearing is deadened, when any instant a shell might come and destroy a gun's crew, or even the ship herself—to do that, I say, shows perfect courage and discipline. At Alexandria it was proof that the old Nelson spirit was still the moving power in the British Navy.

Ah! I knew the question was inevitable! How did I win my own Victoria Cross, and what were the actual circumstances that led to the award? Well, I do not like to talk about my own doings, but since you will have it I will do the best I can.

The *Alexandra* was naturally a special target, and there was plenty of her to hit. The excitement began early. A shell came through the port side forward, and, bursting close to the sheep-pen, killed the only occupant; another cut away a stout iron stanchion, and, narrowly missing the captain—he is now Admiral of the Fleet Sir C. F. Hotham—and the staff-commander, carried off a piece of the fore funnel casing. Another shell struck the steam launch, and exploding in her smashed her to atoms, killing one man and wounding two others. Again the captain had a very narrow escape—there were many close shaves that day.

It was just at this time, when I had been through the upper and main batteries to make sure of everything necessary being supplied, that I was told that the empty hoppers of the Nordenfelt guns, which were being worked by the signalman on the poop, had not been returned to the magazine for refilling. I went to the poop, and Commander Thomas, who was standing on the quarter-deck netting, asked me what I wanted. I told him, and had just left him to go down the ladder to the after-deck, when a shell crashed through the port bulwarks under his feet, and striking a metal stanchion burst in his cabin, destroying everything.

I ought perhaps to explain that the gunnery lieutenant, the Hon. M. Bourke, who was afterwards the captain of the *Victoria* when she was rammed by the *Camperdown*, was very ill, and confined to the cockpit throughout the engagement, so the gunnery duties devolved on me.

I was recovering from the shock of that explosion and was starting to descend the hatchway on the next deck leading to the after-magazine, when a shell penetrated the ship's side, passing through the torpedo lieutenant's cabin. Then it struck against the iron coamings of the engine-room, rebounded round the rifle-racks, and lodged close to a large tub of water which had been placed in readiness to put out any fire that might occur.

Some men who formed the fire party saw the fuse burning, and shouted: "A shell! A shell!" which is about the most jumpy alarm you can raise in battle. It is a signal to make you skip, and I turned round swiftly and saw the awful missile at my feet. At such a time a man does not stop to think,

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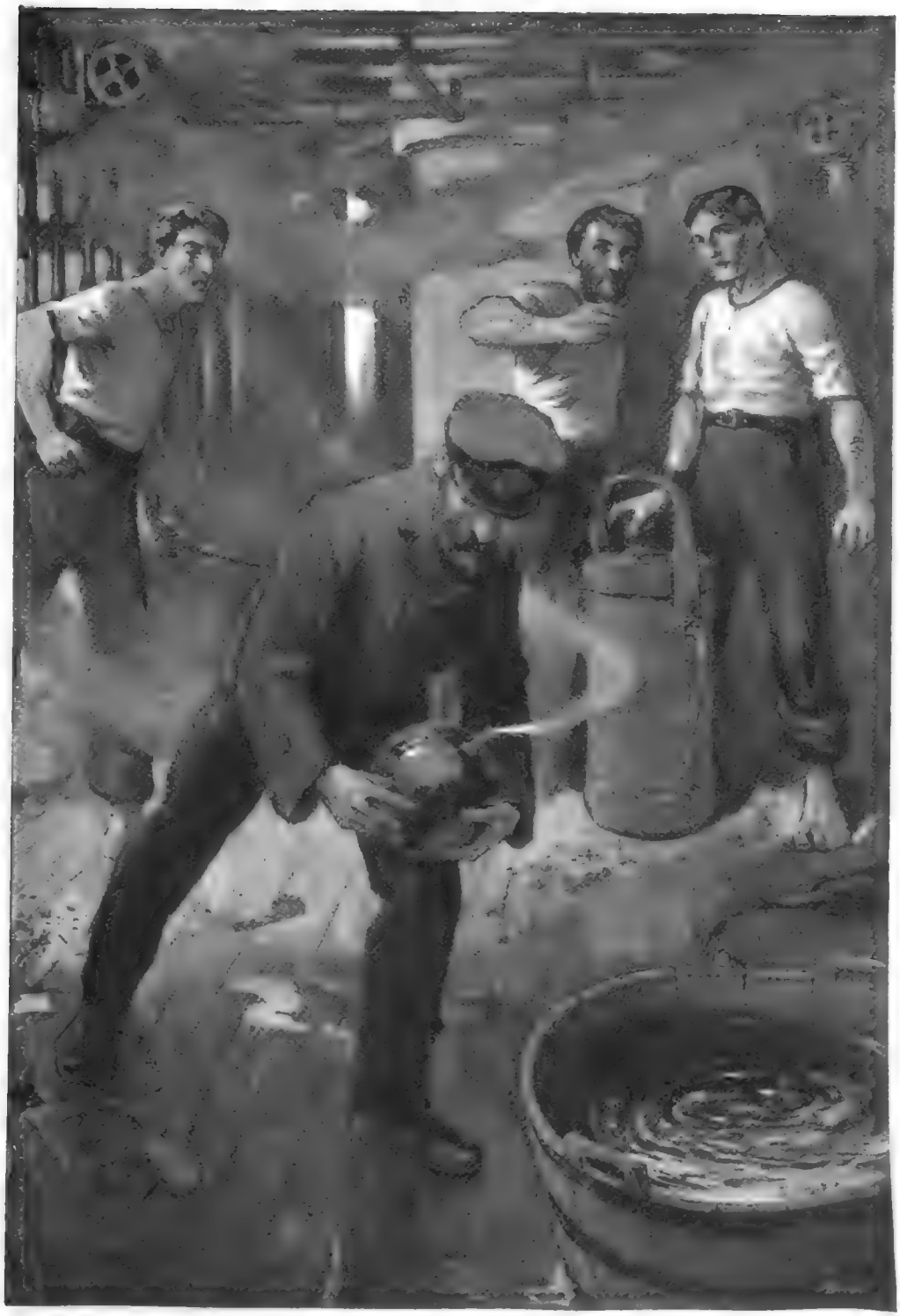

I . . . picked the shell up and instinctively placed it in a tub of water.

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and I stooped and picked the shell up and instinctively placed it in the tub of water, although the chances are even that a fuse will not be extinguished by such means as that. Yet what I wished for happened—the water did its work, the fuse ceased to burn, and the projectile became a harmless object.

One might have smiled to look at it—yet how vast were its possibilities! It was a ten-inch spherical projectile, and contained a bursting charge of twelve pounds of gunpowder. The fuse, which I still possess, is four and a half inches long, and seems to have had an inch or more sawn off at the bottom so that it would burst on reaching the target aimed at. About half the composition of the fuse was burnt away, and in another second or two, if it had not been for the tub of water—but why picture what did not happen?

You do not think that is enough for the incident, and that I should dwell upon it at greater length? Well, let me give you a better idea of what it all meant. Twelve pounds of gunpowder will do an enormous amount of damage if properly directed, and this particular shell was just as nicely placed for mischief as any shell could have been.

For one thing it was in a confined space, being on the main deck, which was equal to being in a large room. There were plenty of officers and men about as prey for its performance, and so that nothing should be lacking to complete its possibilities of havoc, there was within reach of its flames the after-magazine with its twenty-five tons of gunpowder—and not the strongest ship that mortal man has built will survive the explosion of a quantity like that.

I had the awful thing in my hands. What was I to do with it, how get rid of it? I could not thrust or throw it back through the jagged hole by which it had entered the side, nor could I hurl it overboard, because we were in a confined space between decks. There was only this slender, forlorn hope of the tub, and into the tub the missile went. It was a heavy burden, but you do not notice weight at such a crisis as that.

To add to the peril of the situation, eighty-five pound charges of powder were being passed up from the magazine for the upper and main battery guns. These charges were being carried past the very spot where the shell was burning, so that if it had exploded it would have had the additional help of a very fine bursting charge.

So, you see, every possible circumstance contributed to the chances of destruction, and yet they were circumvented on the spur of the moment because of the more or less chance presence of a tub of water, and because of that early training in a hard school of which I have spoken.

One striking and amusing thing comes back to my mind. Over the tub was a tank containing drinking water for the ward-room, and on the tank was painted the warning "Waste not." Perhaps the way in which the moral precept had sunk into my mind may have had something to do with the promptness with which I plumped my live shell into the receptive tub. Never, at any rate, I think, was better use made of water than I made of that.

Our escape was by a hair's breadth, but we were far too busy to think about it then. The fight was raging furiously and guns ashore were being dismounted and magazines blown up. We had a very good opportunity of seeing what an explosion of powder meant, for a shell from the *Superb* blew up the main magazine at Fort Ada. There was a terrific report, and enormous mischief was done. This particular fort had been troubling us greatly, and we instantly felt the relief of its disappearance—so much, indeed, that we were able to pipe our watch to dinner, which had to be taken in the batteries, as our men's mess-deck was in a ruinous state, the tables and stools having been destroyed by shells.

Fort Ada was a special target that day, and it gave evidence of the appalling devastation which modern big guns can cause. The seaward face of Fort Pharos was the target for the eighty-ton guns of the *Inflexible*, and from time to time, above all other noises of the battle, we heard the boom of these artillery monsters. Each shell that was sent weighed 1700 pounds—that is to say, more than three-quarters of a ton—and the flight of the projectile made a sound which has been very fairly compared with the rumble of a railway train.

In connection with one of these weapons, an act of the greatest courage and resource was performed on board the *Inflexible* by an engine-room artificer. The vent of one of her 80-ton guns became choked so badly that the weapon was completely useless, and so that it could be brought again into action the man had to get into it. This would not have been an easy or pleasant performance at any time, but it was doubly disagreeable and dangerous now, when there was great risk of suffocation from the accumulated gases. Besides, it meant that he had to be forced in, very much as if he had been a shot or shell.

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With the help of the rammer he was driven up the bore of the gun, the diameter of which was sixteen inches, as far as the powder-chamber, and there and then he cleared the vent. Then he was hauled back by means of a rope which had been fastened round his ankles, and had his reward in finding that the gun could be brought into action once more.

A good deal is always said of the changed condition of modern fights at sea. Well, ships and guns have altered, but the officers and men do not change, and Alexandria gave proof of the reckless daring which signalised the old days of sails and wooden walls. There was, for instance, the famous achievement of Lord Charles Beresford, who, seeing the mischief which was being done by two ten-inch rifled guns from the forts, steamed audaciously up within range of them and drew off their fire from the other ships, although a single lucky shot would have utterly destroyed him and his gunboat, the *Condor*.

Then there was the no less valiant action of a dozen officers and men from the *Invincible*, one of whom was our Flag-Lieutenant, the Hon. H. Lambton, who landed through a dangerous surf and spiked some guns, destroying others with dynamite, and all under a heavy fire. It was a young seaman of the *Invincible*, too, who, when his wounded leg had been amputated, hopped about with it and displayed it proudly to his comrades. That was certainly the sort of thing they did in Nelson's days.

For more than ten hours we pounded with our guns, and then the enemy had had enough. Their forts were in ruins, their guns were smashed or useless, their dead and wounded were everywhere, and the city was already swarming with deserters and looters, ruffians who spared neither man, woman, nor child, and who set fire to every building they came across. It was a lurid and terrible crowning of our own bombardment, and overwhelmed me with awe as I watched the flames shoot skyward in the darkness.

On our way to our anchorage we were met by an American frigate, whose crew had manned her rigging and cheered us enthusiastically while their band played the British National Anthem.

THE OLD PINK COAT.

I've got on Daddy's old pink coat,
For me it's just a little long.
You see, my Daddy's very tall,
And oh, you'd never guess how strong!

Of course the tails do touch the ground,
And p'raps it is a bit too wide;
But when I wear it I pretend
That I'm on Daddy's horse astride.

And me and Daddy have such jokes.
Oh, here he is! "Do come and play;
Let's make believe to go and hunt!
Come, Daddy! Tally ho! Away!"

Under the table, over chairs—
Was ever such a chase before?
Oh, dear! my coat tails are so long
I've tripped and fallen on the floor!

"Oh, thank you, Daddy!" Now I'm up.
We've had the most exciting run!
I'm rather hot and out of breath,
But—hunting is the bestest fun!

Bertha F. E. Draffen.

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The Story of How a Suburbanite went Back to the Land.

When I retired from business, my wife, dear Margaret, said she thought we should both enjoy living in the country. Clapham Common, though a convenient centre for most things, yet lacked the hayfields, woods, and country lanes so dear to her imagination. Health, she considered, could not possibly be obtained in the suburbs, and, as for doctors, my wife somewhat rudely expressed the opinion that "they were not worth fourpence a dozen."

> Better to roam the fields for health unbought
> Than fee the doctor for a nauseous draught,

she quoted, and although I ventured a feeble protest about the inadvisability of "roaming the fields" in rainy weather, and pointed out the extreme loneliness of country life, I was overruled, and into the country we went.

Westoby Cottage, the place we had chosen, was a pretty-looking gabled house, with a large garden and fifteen acres of meadow land. The former smelt strongly of decaying cabbage, and the very first time I walked down it I stepped on a toad. This annoyed me—and the toad, too, I daresay, when you come to think of it.

Neither Margaret nor I had had any experience of country life, and, when we told the house agent this, he grinned unpleasantly and said we should get plenty of *that* as soon as we went to live at Westoby. I thought he wanted to let us a bigger tenement, and spoke slightingly of this one out of malice.

The very first morning cook came up and informed Margaret that they'd been pumping for twenty minutes, but couldn't get a drop of water. Margaret looked alarmed, but I made light of it.

"What does it matter, my dear?" I said gaily; "we neither of us drink water. The servants have their beer; soda or lithia in a syphon——"

"Oh, James, you are too exasperating for words!" she interrupted snappishly. "How can anything be done without a proper supply of water? How can you even make the tea and coffee? to say nothing of washing and cooking——"

"True, true," I murmured, wishing I hadn't spoken, "but—er—hadn't we better send for the plumber?"

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"That's a three-mile walk," groaned the cook.

"We must send the boy," decided Margaret. And the boy—a hopeful youth we intended to put into "buttons"—was duly dispatched, grumbling, in search of the solitary plumber of Ruston.

After breakfast I smoked a pipe, whilst I took a leisurely walk round our domain. It was very pleasant to think that I owned all this big garden and the pretty-looking fields. (I didn't, as a matter of fact, as I was only a yearly tenant, but no matter.) Then I went into the empty stables, and decided that I must buy a pony forthwith.

I told my gardener (he wasn't my gardener exactly, but a man I had hired at three-and-six a day) this, and the following morning seventeen ponies were brought for my inspection by their different owners, who stood around my front door and quarrelled with each other, to my great embarrassment, each decrying the other sixteen animals and unduly lauding his own.

Now, I had never bought a horse in my life before, and hardly knew how to go about it. One, a piebald, I decided against, at once, as too obtrusive. I had a wholesome fear of being greeted by rude boys with the announcement that the circus was coming.

A bay and a black, both plunging about, were also discarded as a trifle too enterprising for me, though, according to their respective owners, they were placid as lambs. But a brown pony, with a nice long tail, took my fancy. He looked sedate, too—almost morose—and this was a strong recommendation. Putting on a professional air, I proceeded to examine him.

First I felt his pulse, holding my watch in the other hand whilst I did so. Then I picked up his right fore-leg to see if he'd ever been taught to "shake hands." I tested his temper by pulling his mane, and found he didn't mind; then I pulled his tail, whereupon he whisked it right across my face, which was a most unpleasant experience, as it—the tail, not my face—was long and muddy. After that, I felt its hind knees, and looked to see if its other knees had ever been broken. With a view to cheapening it, I remarked that its ribs were rather prominent, but the owner assured me that this was a mark of high breeding, and showed its blood.

It certainly showed its bone.

The man observed that at present the pony was poor. "Why, you could hang your hat on his ragged hips!" he said.

I hastened to say that that was a thing I should never think of doing; it seemed to me an unnecessary and foolish practice.

I looked into the pony's eye and then into his nostrils, he, unfortunately, sneezing as I did so. After this, not knowing exactly what else to examine, I began making inquiries about the price.

The owner asked twenty pounds. I hadn't any idea what ponies cost, but offered fifteen, and immediately became the proud possessor of the long-tailed brown. I paid the man, and he departed chuckling.

Then I tried to lead the pony into the stable, but it seemed unwilling to arouse itself from slumber, and it was only after calling to cook to bring me a carrot that I succeeded in enticing it into the empty stall. I tied the animal up with a piece of string, and went to my ally the gardener, to ask if he also knew of a trap which would fit the pony. He did, this wonderful man, and we arranged that I should see it that afternoon.

I may remark, parenthetically, that, outside his own profession, the gardener was a perfect mine of knowledge—it was only in a garden that he was a mistake, for he never disturbed a weed, but made up for this by a wholesale uprooting of bulbs and plants and tearing down of creepers. It was zeal, if you will, but misdirected, and calculated to cost his employer dearly.

Our next unpleasant discovery was that neither the butcher nor the milkman called for orders—Westoby was too far from the town.

"Another job for the boy," I said blithely, determined to look upon the bright side of things.

"The boy has already given warning," said Margaret in gloomy tones. "Says he'd have to spend all his wages in shoe-leather if he stayed on in such a place as this."

"That's rather annoying," I said. "Ha! a happy thought; he shall do these errands on the pony."

The boy, who said he knew all about horses, took charge of my new purchase, and began by bedding him down on cocoa-nut matting and giving him a feed of sawdust. Of course, not being an expert, I was hardly in a position to say whether this treatment was right or wrong; but the pony betrayed no indecent haste to attack the sawdust—perhaps he had a delicate appetite. When, however, I gave him a bun, he appeared to prefer it to the boy's offering; but, on following up this treatment with the

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proffer of a stale ham sandwich, I was met by an unequivocal refusal.

Next day, not possessing a saddle, we fastened a coloured blanket on to the pony with a piece of string. I gave the boy a "leg up," and he would have started; I have every confidence that he *meant* to do so. But the pony had other views. Nothing we could do or think of would induce him to take even the first step towards Ruston. And, after a quarter of an hour's hard work, the boy dismounted, quite worn out with his efforts.

An animal of this unenterprising description really did not seem of much use to me. He must be conquered, so, standing on one of the kitchen chairs, I got on him, gathered up the reins, and jabbed my heels into his shaggy sides. To my intense astonishment he ducked his head between his fore-legs, kicked up both before and behind, and started at a shambling gallop for the town.

How I ever survived the jolting of those awful three miles, and managed not to fall off my saddleless steed, I shall never know. All my efforts to stop the hard-mouthed brute were unavailing, and, amidst ribald shouts from the street boys, I was carried into Ruston High Street, *nolens volens*, hatless, and gasping for breath—then, at the sign of the Bricklayer's Arms, a low beerhouse, the pony pulled up with such a sudden jerk that I went right over his head.

On rising, well plastered with mud, my feelings were not openly expressed—fortunately for the morals of Ruston—and my temper was not improved by the audible remarks of a passing coal-heaver who, regarding first the pony, and then the "pub," said to his mate:

"Ah! sensible as a Christian, ain't 'e? 'E know'd right enough where the ole man got 'is gargle, even if the bloke 'ad forgot it 'issell."

I turned scarlet at the baseless imputation, and, longing to hide myself, rushed into a linendraper's shop and asked, in my confusion, for a pound of tenpenny nails.

I had to charter a fly to take me back to Westoby, and I finally arrived there, towing the pony behind it—it was no light task to induce him to start, and only by the stimulating influence of a crossing-sweeper's broom, could he be induced to undertake the trip. A plentiful supply of carrots did the rest, and by hanging over the back of the fly all the way home, brandishing one of the succulent vegetables in my hand, I managed to lure the perverse little beast back to his stable.

Margaret was very annoyed when I returned, and made some nasty remarks about men who "went off" (I felt rather hurt at this expression) on horseback "gallivanting" (whatever that may mean), when there were serious troubles to be faced in the course of "getting in."

I declined to argue the matter; only in defence I pointed to my mud-stained clothes and, after seeing that the pony had another feed of sawdust, I retired upstairs to wash and change.

That night—or rather at 2 a.m.—we were aroused by the flash of a dark lantern on the window-panes of our bedroom. I trust I am gifted with the pluck of the average Briton, but I am free to confess that I felt somewhat disquieted as I turned out and peered through the window; and I admit that, as I caught sight of a hulking form in the night-fog, dark lantern in hand, apparently examining the fastening of the dining-room window, my heart, in vulgar parlance, sank into my boots.

It was at that moment that I began to realise the immensity of our solitude: three miles from everywhere! That was the awful truth.

I looked again at the dark form below me. Really, I could not be expected to cope with a man of this description. As I opened the window cautiously he called out:

"You must come down and——"

"Never!" I cried. "What! to be robbed and slain, perhaps, on my own doorstep? Assassin! take what you want and go; leave me in peace. Leave me also the apostle spoons; they belonged to my grandmother."

The lantern was flashed again, and then I saw that the man was a policeman.

I laughed loudly, though mirthlessly, at this.

"Of course I was only joking. I—I saw you were a policeman all the time," I said feebly.

But I am afraid neither dear Margaret nor the constable quite believed what I said. Some people are so very hard to convince.

I huddled on a dressing-gown and descended.

"Dining-room winder left undone, sir; not very safe, that," said the constable, coughing the raw, damp fog out of his throat. "We get some pretty bad characters about here."

"Indeed!" I said falteringly. I was astonished to think that bad characters could live in so peaceful a spot.

"Oh, yes, sir, plenty of 'em. Some of

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'em desprit fellers, and, when poachin' ain't to be done safely, they'll turn their 'ands to burglary, 'ousebreakin', or what not — well, sir, as you say, it *is* a nasty night," with a glance at the spirit decanter, "and, well—only jest a thimbleful, then, it must be —good 'ealth, sir; no, no water with it, sir, thank you. Talkin' o' water, I s'pose you ain't got over much 'ere?—no —ah, I thought not. The last four tenants 'as all 'ad to go because they could never get a bath —oh, thank you, sir, but it must be only a small drop then — no, no water, sir. Ah, that's good stuff, that is. I advise you to see to your lockin' up jest now, as there's some houtrageous gipsies campin' the other side of your long 'edge as'd sneak anythink, in the 'ouse or outside. As to your 'ens, why, you won't 'ave one of 'em left, I don't s'pose, unless I looks round 'ere 'most every night."

The lantern was flashed again, and then I saw that the man was a policeman.

I thanked him gratefully—even effusively—and begged him to do this, mentally wondering, however, whether I hadn't better lay in a cheaper sort of whisky.

"Would they really steal the hens?" I ventured.

"Steal the *'ens?*" he ejaculated scornfully; "why, they'd steal the *'ouse!* No end of trouble we 'as with 'em. But even they ain't so bad as the burglars 'ereabouts."

I shivered slightly. I suppose I felt chilly in my thin dressing-gown.

"Ah, desprit chaps one or two of 'em is!" he resumed with gusto. "That there Carrotty Bob as works all this district, 'e's the chap we're tryin' to get 'old of; always goes armed, 'e does, with a revolver, a most houtrageous villeyan; stick at nothin', 'e wouldn't. Good-night, sir," and I was again alone in the dark.

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I rushed up to bed, three steps at a time. I—I was rather afraid of getting a chill, as it were.

We had our first visit from the newly-arrived gipsies next day. I assumed an austere demeanour to the women and children, but thought a more conciliatory attitude would be advisable towards the men.

They came selling brushes and brooms and impossible chairs, which no one could sit on. I stood on my front step and waved them haughtily away. That is, I waved—they didn't go away. For nearly half-an-hour three of these dark-skinned infidels remained, importuning me to buy their wares, offering to take old clothes in exchange. Having exhausted all my eloquence, I went in and shut the door in their faces. Then, at length, they left—contemporaneously with three of my best Brahma hens and a silver spoon.

An hour later, the plumber arrived from Ruston. We had been carrying water in pails from our nearest neighbour's pond—half-a-mile away—to supply the household and prevent the kitchen boiler bursting.

This, though healthful exercise, was very wearing, and a process somewhat lacking in interest. I therefore hailed the advent of the plumber with a secret joy. But my happiness was short-lived, for the horny-handed son of toil took a most despondent view of the situation and quickly dashed my hopes.

"Ah, this ain't the fust time as I've been sent for about the water supply, nor it won't be the last, neither. The bloke as was 'ere before you, 'e couldn't get a pint a day out o' the well. Torkin' of a pint makes yer thirsty, guv'nor, don't it?" He broke off abruptly.

I took the hint and called the cook to draw a jug of beer.

"Good 'ealth, sir," he said, as he tossed off a glass of the thick, muddy-looking fluid, and wiped his mouth with the back of his hand. "No, this 'ere well will never give no water unless it's bin rainin' 'ard for twenty-four hour. It ain't a job for no plumber; plumbin's not wanted, it's *water!*"

Then he added lugubriously:

"You'll 'ave to sink a noo well—corst yer matter o' fifty pounds or more."

I felt that I could never face Margaret with such awful intelligence.

I was thoroughly unfortunate that afternoon. Having, on the gardener's recommendation, bought a pony cart, I meant to go for a drive. So I ordered the boy to "put to" and come round to the house. I drew on a pair of new dogskin gloves, and waited at the open door. Then the boy appeared and informed me that my order could not be carried out.

"And why?" I asked severely. "There is the pony, there is the cart, and——"

"Yus, but you ain't got no 'arness," broke in the youth brusquely.

This was crude, but I must admit that there was a great deal in what he said. I thought of suggesting string and some rug-straps, but abandoned the idea as too unconventional. Instead, I strolled round the fields, getting over my ankles in mud and revolving the question of sinking a new well. Finally, I resolved to call in expert advice, and, just as I came to this decision, I saw some boys mushrooming in my next meadow.

Very irate, I rushed after them, but, jumping a ditch, slipped on the greasy clay, and sat down with fearful violence in the wet grass. Meantime the mushroom stealers had decamped with their baskets full. A little further on I suddenly came upon three gipsies coolly snaring *my* rabbits. They did not even trouble themselves to desist temporarily, but only grinned on seeing me.

"Are you aware that you are poaching?" I shouted across the hedge.

"Garn!" was the impudent reply, "we've got the owner's leave to do a bit o' rabittin' to-day."

For the moment I was struck dumb by this astounding piece of mendacity.

"*I* am the owner," I replied proudly but somewhat nervously. "And I request you to discontinue your illegal practices at once, if not sooner"—I hardly knew, in my excitement, what words I used—"or—or—" (here one of the gang showed his white teeth in giving me a savage stare) "or I shall go for the police," I ended. Then, as the three ruffians picked up their thick sticks and were getting through the hedge towards me, I felt that controversial topics with such a crew were really beneath me, and I left the spot on a rapid return trip to the house.

Then I sent the boy to fetch the solitary police-constable who represented law and order in our district, only to find that he had gone to an outlying village and was not expected home till night.

That afternoon the rector called. He told us a great deal about the difficulty we should find in keeping any women servants in so remote a place, of the scarcity of society, and of the urgent financial needs of the Coal and Blanket Club (subs. 2s. 6d.), the Boot Club (2s. 6d.), the Flannel Petticoat Club (2s.), the Christmas Dinner Club (2s. 6d.), and even of

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the village Football Club (this I respectfully, though firmly, declined to aid). He then proceeded to consume four cups of tea and seven rounds of buttered toast, said good-bye, and left.

I was enjoying my after-dinner cigar and remarking to Margaret how peaceful everything was, when a sudden tramping of horses' hoofs in the front garden roused me to action. I rushed out of the front door to see the dark, indistinct forms of some six or eight horses grazing on my lawn and nibbling my flower-heads off. I ran back, armed myself with an umbrella, and then returned to the garden to drive the beasts off.

This was not such an easy business as it seemed. As soon as I got them all before me and prodded up the hindmost, that exasperating animal would kick out, to the imminent danger of my life, and the whole drove would break away again, galloping ruthlessly over my flower-beds.

I soon found, too, that the gate had been shut after the brutes had come in—the gipsies had coolly turned them in to graze in my front garden for the night. It took me half-an-hour to drive the intruders out — and at four a.m. I was aroused from sleep to find them all in there again.

That beast of a dog sat himself down at the foot of the tree, and for the whole solid night . . . kept watch and ward.

"My dear," I said to Margaret at breakfast that morning, "what with the water supply, the gipsies, the threatened servant troubles, the abnormal demands made upon us by local charities, the ungracious behaviour of a pampered pony, and several minor discomforts, I hardly feel we are getting that peaceful repose which we had expected from life in the country. However, we must hope for ——"

At this moment the door was hastily opened, and a somewhat alarming-looking figure appeared, its face, hands, and raiment partially covered with soot. Closer examination revealed the identity of Mary Jane, our housemaid.

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"Oh, please, mum, it's the drorin'-room chimbley; it's smothered everything with soot! An' it's all over the best carpet, too."

By tacit consent Margaret and I rose from the table, left our breakfast to get cold, and hurried to the scene of the disaster. Half the room was under several inches of soot.

But I rose to the occasion—you see, I knew exactly what to do. I commanded cook and the boy to be summoned, and then set all three servants to work sweeping up. The gardener I dispatched for a light rope and a tall ladder. Then I cut a large branch of holly and prepared for action.

"We must have the sweep," said Margaret gloomily.

"By no means," I returned cheerfully. "Observe, my dear, that, in the country, self-reliance is indispensable. One can always save money by doing these things oneself."

I went up the ladder, which the gardener held, instructing the boy to station himself by the drawing-room fireplace and look up the chimney. Unluckily, as he did so, another heavy fall of soot occurred, and he swallowed a liberal amount of it. Meantime, I had gained the roof, and was swarming cautiously up it towards the drawing-room chimney-pot.

Arrived at the stack, I fastened my line to the holly branch, dropped the coil at the other end down the chimney-pot (incidentally hitting the boy severely on the nose, as I afterwards learnt), put the holly into the top of the chimney, and shouted down to the boy to "Pull!"

He did so, and I had the satisfaction of seeing my improvised broom disappear, and knew he must be scraping the chimney clean. Then I cautiously descended and went indoors to see how my scheme worked.

"I've bin a-pullin' on the rope, but the 'olly's got stuck 'arf way," said the boy sadly. He was even sootier than Mary Jane had been. I smiled and took the end of the line from him.

"This is the way to do it," I said; "one, two, three and a jerk and——"

And at that moment the line came away in my hands, the holly remaining fast wedged in the chimney. Margaret's bitter laugh rankles with me to this day.

Next morning we had to have two bricklayers and a labourer up with ladders, and hods and trowels and things, to extract several bricks from the chimney in the effort to reach that piece of holly. They actually built a scaffolding up the side of the house to do the job. I believe those men would have built a scaffolding to putty a window-pane!

When the bill came in, Margaret said (most unfairly, I consider) that she failed to see where the "saving" came in through my having turned amateur chimney-sweep. I was already beginning to think that, after all, the country was not so peaceful or desirable a place as I had been led to expect, but an incident—I had almost written an outrage—which occurred that very evening quite decided me.

Whilst strolling round my garden with an after-dinner cigar, an ill-conditioned, bob-tailed sheep dog suddenly leapt the low fence out of the paddock and made a ferocious onslaught on me, ME, the owner—I mean tenant—of the whole place!

At first, indignation struggled with fear, but as the savage brute got nearer and nearer, fiercer and fiercer, I, being a man of peace, deemed it prudent to climb the adjacent walnut tree, and to climb it in a hurry.

After glaring savagely up at me for ten minutes or so, that beast of a dog sat himself down at the foot of the tree, and for the whole solid night—the longest I ever passed in my life — he kept watch and ward. The patience he exhibited on that solitary vigil was phenomenal. I was suffering agonies from cramp and fear combined. And when it began to rain, and steadily soaked through my second-best dress suit, I clenched my teeth and made a solemn vow.

It was not till the dawn was breaking next morning, that the shepherd arrived and freed me from my terrible position.

When I reached the house (arriving with the milk) Margaret, who had been sitting up for me all night, rather tartly invited me to explain myself. What did I mean by this extraordinary conduct? and where had I been, she should like to know? But I bade her cease, and speaking with a deep sense of emotion, said:

"Margaret, my dear, you have known me long enough to be aware that I am not in the habit of spending my nights in company with the tomcats on the tiles, neither should I voluntarily remain out all night in the pouring rain with nothing on more capable of resisting it than a dress suit.

"My dignity has been outraged, I have suffered the greatest humiliation, and shall probably be laid up with an attack of pneumonia. As soon as is feasible, we leave Westoby Cottage and abandon the idea of a country life, now and for ever. Henceforth, Clapham Common is good enough for me."

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Photo Ellis & Walery.
Mr. Geo. Grossmith, Jun.

The Funniest Thing I Ever Saw

The Leading Comedians of the Day Describe the Most Amusing Incident They have ever Witnessed.

It has often been said, and with a certain amount of justification, that no incident is too trivial to have its humorous side; though, to be sure, many people miss this humour through lack of a sufficiently keen sense of the ridiculous. It is strange, too, how frequently some incident or other which one person describes as "the funniest thing I have ever seen in my life" fails altogether to appeal to another.

However, no one should be a better judge of a really humorous incident than a comedian. I have, therefore, collected from the leading laughter-makers of the day accounts of various happenings which, in their opinion, afforded them more spontaneous amusement at the time than any other incident they have ever witnessed.

It is quite possible that the identical experiences, or, at any rate, very similar experiences, may have fallen to our readers' lot, in which case they will doubtless be doubly interested to compare their feelings at the time the incident happened with those of the "professional mirth provoker."

Mr. Geo. Grossmith, Jun., tells a story of a pocket-picking member of the Stock Exchange.

Mr. George Grossmith, jun., recalls a host of amusing incidents he has witnessed at one time and another, but, finally, after long consideration, he awards the palm to a certain happening which not long ago befell a friend of his, a prominent member of the Stock Exchange.

This gentleman, in the intervals when he was not "bulling" and "bearing," devoted his spare time to a little amateur pocket-picking among his friends, and it is on record that one morning he succeeded in extracting no fewer than five cigarette-cases, two cigar-cases, and four watches and chains from the pockets of unsuspecting brokers. Needless to say, the stolen property was returned in due course, but not, however, before the owners had been reduced to a feeling of the utmost disgust at having been so careless as to allow their pockets to be picked.

On a certain hot afternoon in August, when there was very little business doing, the "light-fingered" broker made a wager of ten pounds with a friend that in less than half-an-hour he would collect in Throgmorton Street five gold watches and chains without being detected. Mr. George Grossmith happened to be present and watched the proceedings with the greatest interest.

For a short time all went well, and in less than fifteen minutes the triumphant broker had secured three gold watches, and it looked, as the taker of the bet remarked in mournful tones, "a stone cold certainty that he would lose his tenner." But just as the amateur pickpocket was skilfully extracting a fourth watch and chain, Mr. Grossmith noticed a world-weary down-at-heel loafer pass his hand quietly in front of the "amateur's" waistcoat and gently remove therefrom his valuable watch. As he did so, however, he noticed that his victim was engaged in doing the same thing with someone else. He therefore tapped him lightly on the shoulder and gravely handed him back his watch and chain, remarking apologetically: "Beg pardon, sir, I must give you your 'stuff' back again, for I never robs one of the profession.

"*There's honour even among us thieves, ain't there, guv'nor?*"

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Mr. G. P. Huntley relates the adventure of a gentleman with a large mouth.

Mr. G. P. Huntley selects an incident which occurred many years ago when he was

Photo *Dover Street Studios.*
Mr. G. P. Huntley.

spending a few days with a friend of his, a member of a travelling company which could boast of the distinction of having played before the smallest house on record—the audience consisted of one lonely soul, the local piano maker, from whom the "orchestra" had been hired for the occasion, and who doubtless only turned up in order to see that his property was not abused.

Under these trying circumstances, therefore, it was not altogether surprising that the various members of the company had not received their salaries for several weeks. Indeed, things had been so bad that the actors could not between them scrape together the price of a whisky and soda.

Now the juvenile lead, who, by the by, had a most capacious mouth which stretched from ear to ear, and which, according to his brother actors, reminded them of nothing so much as "the opening of a circus tent," felt this lack of funds very severely, for Nature had endowed him with a colossal capacity for swallowing liquid refreshment. One day, however, the villain of the company came into "a small fortune," or, in other words, he received a postal order for a whole ten shillings from a friend who was rash enough to trust him. The news of this unexpected windfall soon spread, and immediately the order was cashed twelve thirsty actors adjourned to the nearest bar to partake of the hospitality of the fortunate "Crœsus."

On being asked "what they would have," the actors, with one accord, voted for whisky and soda, and all went well until the juvenile lead, in response to the query as to what he would like to indulge in, remarked: "Oh, thank you, I'll have a mouthful of whisky."

"No you won't, sonny," replied his host, first of all gazing tenderly at his half-sovereign and then casting a reproachful glance at the juvenile lead's cavernous jaws, "you'll have just the same amount of whisky as the others have."

♡ ♡ ♡

Mr. Willie Edouin describes the downfall of an American bore.

Mr. Willie Edouin confesses that "he did a forty-horse power laugh" at an incident he once witnessed at a certain hotel famous for its American visitors and the versatility of its American bar-tender.

"One hot July afternoon I was sitting in a corner all by myself and sipping—h'm—well, anyway I was sipping something," says Mr. Edouin, "when I saw a particularly garrulous gentleman, who was the *bête noire* of everyone unfortunate enough to know him, approach an American visitor, evidently much to the latter's disgust. However, after being buttonholed for half-an-hour, and after every effort to rid himself of his unpopular acquaintance had failed, the American tried the soothing effects of a little light refreshment.

"'Do you drink?' he asked politely.

"'That's my business,' was the curt reply, doubtless intended to represent the acme of facetiousness.

"This was evidently the last straw, for,

Photo *Elli & Walery*
Mr. Willie Edouin.

eyeing him up and down, the American replied: 'Have you any other business?'"

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Photo *Dover Street Studios.*
Mr. Dan Rolyat.

Mr. Dan Rolyat unfolds the tale of the young lady and the old gentleman in a 'bus.

Mr. Dan Rolyat considers that the humble omnibus is a silent witness of many a humorous incident, and selects a happening he saw only a few weeks ago in Whitehall.

The 'bus had stopped, and every seat was full, when suddenly a young lady entered. Just at the same moment an old gentleman sitting at the other end got up from his seat.

"Oh, no, really, I couldn't think——" said the blushing maiden.

"But, madam——" interrupted the old gentleman.

"No, not on any account; I should feel so terribly selfish and——" expostulated the damsel, as she waved the courteous passenger back to his seat.

"I really must insist on ——" continued the old gentleman, rapidly growing purple in the face.

"I really don't mind a little bit, and, in fact, I——" said "beauty," with the sweetest of smiles.

"Can't you see, madam, that ——" said the old gentleman irascibly.

"It's very charming of you, but, really, I can just as well stand," the young lady said firmly as she proceeded to "strap-hang."

"You are perfectly at liberty to do just as you like about that, miss," said the old gentleman, advancing towards the door, "but I want to get out."

Mr. Walter Passmore retails a letter from a bereaved father.

Mr. Walter Passmore considers that, if one only looks at things in the right way, there is humour in almost everything which happens, "from being out of employment down to burying your mother-in-law." Still, as it is the unexpected which generally provokes the greatest laughter, he gives his casting vote to an example of "unexpectedness" which occurred when he was stopping at a little farmhouse near Lewes some years ago.

"I was the guest of a certain gentleman farmer," says Mr. Passmore, "and one evening in the middle of dinner we were horrified to learn from one of the farm hands, who rushed unceremoniously into the room, that a little girl—I suppose I should say baby girl, for she was barely eighteen months old—had been attacked and badly bitten by a certain ferocious mastiff which my friend kept as a watch-dog to frighten away tramps and other undesirables. Half-an-hour later, to my friend's deep sorrow, a message was received saying that the child had died from fright. Of course, we rushed off post-haste to condole with the sorrowing parents, but, as they refused to see us, my friend had perforce to rest content with expressing his sympathy by letter, at the same time adding the hope that if there were any other juvenile members of the family they should be told not to go near stray dogs.

"The next day my farmer friend received the following reply, and the look on his face as he read it caused me," says Mr. Passmore, "nearly to die with laughter.

"'*Dear sir*,' the letter ran, '*Yours of yesterday's date to hand, and if you think that I am going to nourish my children until they are old enough for your dogs to make a* whole *meal of you are mistaken.*'"

Photo, Foulsham & Banfield.
Mr. Walter Passmore.

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Photo Ellis & Walery.
Mr. Edmund Payne.

Mr. Edmund Payne spins a characteristic yarn concerning a 'bus driver.

Mr. Edmund Payne has a particularly keen sense of the ridiculous, and can extract humour from incidents which would surely escape most people's notice.

"Quite the most amusing incident I have ever seen," says Mr. Payne, "occurred one evening when I was enjoying a breath of fresh air on a 'bus in Piccadilly. At the corner of Bond Street, where the 'bus stopped for a minute or two to take up more passengers, the driver turned round and said: 'You watch me make that there cove wild'—pointing to the driver of a Victoria and King's Cross omnibus which was approaching from the opposite direction. I accordingly awaited developments, and, as the other driver went slowly by, my humorously-inclined friend quietly took off his badge, and waved it solemnly to and fro with a slow, gentle swing.

"The other driver immediately became purple in the face with rage, and shouted wildly: 'You wait till I get you in the yard; then I'll give you a dusting up!' I inquired why such an apparently harmless action as waving a badge to and fro should cause the rival 'bus-driver to become almost demented with rage.

"'Well, sir, it's this way,' replied the driver confidentially, as he put back his badge, and smote the near horse affectionately on the shoulder, 'is father 'ad a little trouble with the 'angman, that's all.'"

Mr. Harry Randall culls his narrative from a boarding-house.

Mr. Harry Randall recalls with huge delight an experience he encountered at a boarding-house in Brighton on a certain occasion when he chanced to look in to have lunch with a friend who was trying "a seaside boarding-house health cure."

Just as the guests were filing in to enjoy the Thursday lunch, which, with unfailing regularity, always consisted of cold beef and salad, followed by a mysterious concoction which the landlady called "Tipsy Cake"—"and," adds Mr. Randall, "it was certainly disguised"—a new boarder arrived. He was a most benevolent, sanctimonious-looking gentleman garbed in deep black, and his bald, shiny head and ruddy complexion, well tanned by the sun, pointed to his leading a healthy, open-air life.

As he took his seat on the right hand side of the landlady, that kindly soul leant towards him and, in a whisper not intended to reach the ear of the other guests, quietly said:

"Would you be so kind as to say Grace, sir?"

The sanctified-looking stranger, with the puzzled air of one who does not hear distinctly what has been said to him, immediately

Photo, Foulsham & Banfield.
Mr. Harry Randall.

put his left hand up to his left ear and shouted:

"I must trouble you to speak louder, ma'am, because I'm so devilish deaf."

Someone else said Grace.

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Mr. Arthur Williams tells of unavailing politeness.

"I was travelling on the underground one evening," says Mr. Arthur Williams, "when, just as the train was leaving South Kensington Station, a young lady carrying a pair of skates—she had evidently just come from Prince's Skating Rink—jumped into the carrriage, which was already quite full.

Photo Ellis & Walery.

Mr. Arthur Williams.

"I immediately rose to offer her my seat, but she politely refused, saying, in mournful tones: 'No, thank you, I prefer to stand for a change, as I have been sitting down most of the afternoon.'

"And a glance at the dishevelled state of the unsuccessful skater's dress bore ample testimony to the truth of her statement."

♡ ♡ ♡

Mr. George Robey goes to the football field for a humorous story.

Mr. George Robey, who seeks relaxation from the strain of provoking merriment by indulging in the gentle art of kicking goals, votes solid for a football match he once witnessed between two teams of miners in Lancashire as providing the funniest experience he ever went through.

The players on both sides showed a delightful disregard for rules of any sort, but any lack of skill was amply compensated for by the strenuous energy of the footballers, who had selected the ground in a quiet spot where, as one player expressed it, "they wouldn't get no interference." Accordingly, Mr. George Robey and three stray passers-by were the sole witnesses of the stirring contest. Before the match began it was discovered that there was no referee, but on being offered five shillings "if he did his duty," one of the spectators, a little man of very slight physique and standing about five foot six, in a weak moment offered to act in that capacity.

"That moment," says Mr George Robey, "was his undoing."

The first hitch occurred just before the game began, when the captain discovered that in the whole crowd there was not a single member who possessed a coin to toss up with. This difficulty was, however, solved by one brilliant player who suggested that the best thing to do "would be to throw up the referee," and to simplify matters it was arranged that if he fell on his head that would mean tails; if he fell on his feet "heads" would be understood. The referee was accordingly thrown up forthwith—and fell on his back—which was unanimously condemned as an act of gross carelessness on the tosser's part. It was therefore decreed that the other side had won the "throw-up."

Just before the signal was given for the start, one of the captains hastily called the referee on one side and engaged him in earnest conversation.

"*We* are going to win this match," he remarked in significant tones.

"I am sure I wish both you and your opponents every success, and I sincerely hope the best team will win," replied the conscientious referee, with true sportsmanlike feelings, though in somewhat nervous

Photo Ellis & Walery.

Mr. George Robey.

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tones, for he was beginning to realise that his billet promised to be far from a sinecure.

"I said *we* were going to win," continued the captain, emphasising the "we" by bringing the clenched fist of his right hand down with a resounding thump on the open palm of his left. "And if we are successful you are on a 'shiner' (Lancashire slang for half sovereign)."

"But if you don't win?" queried the little referee with keen business-like instinct, "am I on anything then?"

"Yes," was the curt reply. "You'll be on a stretcher."

"Evidently this delightful prospect of being in for a good hiding was too much for the spirit of that referee," says Mr. George Robey, "for the last thing I saw of him was a fleeting glimpse of his back-view as, chased by twenty-two infuriated miners, he bolted like a rabbit off the field.

"So did I," adds Mr. Robey, "for it occurred to me that they might select me as the next referee."

Photo Ellis & Walery.
Mr. Seymour Hicks.

Mr. Seymour Hicks narrates the crushing of a boastful Yankee.

Mr. Seymour Hicks, most mercurial of actors, still chuckles when he recalls a certain incident he witnessed during a recent visit to Ireland.

"I was sitting in the smoking-room of my hotel one night," says Mr. Hicks, "listening with profound astonishment to the very 'tall' stories a certain American was telling about the land of Stars and Stripes. For fully a quarter of an hour the Yankee continued to enlarge upon his imagination, recalling many instances of the marvellous speed with which buildings were erected 'way over yonder.'

"At last, however, he taxed the credence of his hearers to the breaking point by telling of a certain twenty-four storey building which was started in New York and finished within a fortnight.

"This was too much for his patient hearers, and a certain Irishman, who had been listening in silence with open-eyed astonishment for some time, remarked in an off-hand manner:

"'Shure, that's aisy. At my home, near Dalkey, I have seen them laying the foundations for a row of houses in the morning when I am setting out to go to the office, and at night, when I come back, they're turning the people out for back rent.'

"Collapse and utter rout of the Yankee."

✣ ✣ ✣ ✣ ✣ ✣

A LIFE SENTENCE.

Now if a girl becomes a thief,
At least if she is caught,
She gets six months' imprisonment
Or something of the sort.

Of course it's only right and fair
That she should catch it hot;
But one such little thief I know
Has stolen such a lot

That no slight punishment will serve
Repentance to impart;
I hope to sentence her for life—
The girl that stole my heart!

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MUSIC HATH CHARMS

A·COMEDY·OF·TEARS

BY REGINALD RIGBY

Herr Vamp und Strumm, musician,
Though born in Walham Green,
Nee Jones, looked quite Hungarian,
When not too closely seen.

He played on the piano
(And really played it well);
'Twas thus he won Matilda,
The Clapham Junction belle.

He met her at a party
One memorable night.
Matilda looked so soulful,
He fell in love at sight.

He called upon her mother,
And stayed to have some tea;
Then, left alone with Tillie,
Thought "Here's the chance for me."

He spoke in broken English—
Excepting when at home—
And told her of his triumphs
In Dresden, Paris, Rome.

(He'd never travelled farther
Than Margate at the most.
His "triumphs"—on the beaches
At places round the coast.)

"Und did she lof der musig?"
She doated on its charms.
He stepped to the piano
And started off with Brahms.

She sat in stony silence,
And didn't turn a hair;
He gave her Bach and Chopin,
Then Wagner in despair.

He tweedled in the treble,
He r-rumbled in the bass;
While salty tears of anguish
Coursed slowly down his face.

He served up classic dainties—
Fugue, scherzo, leit motif;
The stolid way she took them
Was really past belief.

What air *could* move this loved one,
And bring her to his feet?
He tried in desperation
A ballad of the street.

To one so highly cultured
'Twas very galling; but
He conquered her by playing
"My little Wooden Hut"!

At last, engulfed in rapture,
Her tears she couldn't check;
And, heedless of his collar,
Wept freely down his neck!

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THE QUESTS of PAUL BECK.

No. III.—DROWNED DIAMONDS.

By M. McDonnell Bodkin, K.C.

This is the Third Story of this Splendid Series, which Commenced in the March Number.

Mr. Paul Beck went to Eagleton on business. He stayed for pleasure.

He was sent down to secure evidence against a young bank clerk suspected of serious defalcations. The result of his investigations was to send to penal servitude a highly-respectable bank manager who had ingeniously endeavoured to shift his own guilt on to a subordinate.

The amount at stake was very large and the fee substantial. The job had only taken four days, and Mr. Beck, who had nothing pressing on his hands, stayed on at the Rockwell Hotel, Eagleton. The place has so recently and so suddenly grown into public favour that it may be as well to mention that Eagleton has been always one of the most beautiful, and is now one of the most popular, watering-places in the three kingdoms. The town stands on a gentle slope, backed by a circle of high hills and fronted by a beautiful bay.

Doubtless the building of Rockwell Hotel largely helped to make Eagleton fashionable so speedily. At one corner of the bay a broad, flat tableland, level as a billiard-table, runs out into the water. A foot under the soil is solid rock which meets the sea in a sheer wall fifty feet high. Of this wall twenty feet are over the water, and thirty feet under it.

Right at the edge the great hotel is built. The terrace at the back of the hotel looks not merely over the sea, but down into it. The boats are moored under the hotel windows, and spring-boards for bathers strike out from the railings of the terrace. It reminds one of Venice, with this difference, that instead of a dark, muddy canal there is a wide expanse of clear, blue water hedged in by the everlasting hills. No wonder the Rockwell Hotel made Eagleton popular.

Yet it was not the beauties of Nature—at least the inanimate beauties—that kept Mr. Beck in the place after his work was over.

No doubt it suited him. There was a fine golf links at the further end of the town where the land begins to slope up from the sea. The sea-fishing was excellent, and Mr. Beck, as we know, loved fishing of all kinds. A tiny motor launch—light and swift as a bird—whisked him over the bay to the spot, near or far, where fish were plentiful and hungry. These were potent inducements, no doubt, but there was still "metal more attractive."

The main inducement that held him in Eagleton was the charming companionship of Miss Alice Rosedale, the American heiress, who was staying with her father, Joshua Rosedale, at the Rockwell Hotel. Mr. Beck liked girls—especially when they were so young and pretty as Miss Alice Rosedale. This stout, middle-aged detective was as devoted to the service of the sex as a knight-errant of old, and as ready when the chance offered to do them a service.

Let it be said the feeling was reciprocal. All the girls were fond of Mr. Beck and treated him with an affectionate freedom and familiarity that made the young men grind their teeth with envy.

Miss Alice Rosedale publicly declared she was in love with him, and was ready at any time to throw over any of her young admirers for a round of golf with Mr. Beck, or a run over the bay in his motor-boat.

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Yet, strange to say, her two chief admirers, though hating each other cordially, were both the very best friends of Mr. Beck, and, moreover, her father had taken a very special fancy to the good-humoured, good-natured detective.

"May I come?" he said one morning, as Mr. Beck went down the iron ladder from the hotel terrace to his motor-boat. "There is something particular I want to say to you."

"Of course," said Mr. Beck, as he slipped the rope from the ring.

Mr. Rosedale sat in the stern, smoking a huge cigar, while the boat slid out over the still blue waters of the bay—swift, smooth, and noiseless as a skater on ice.

Plainly Mr. Rosedale had a difficulty about that something particular he wanted to say to Mr. Beck.

He began awkwardly enough at last. "It is only this morning," he said, "I heard you were the detective who got the young fellow out of his trouble, and brought the real criminal to book. All the town was talking about the business, but no one knew you had a hand in it. I saw the new bank manager yesterday. I had a pretty big lodgment to make, and he told me the whole story in confidence. 'Gad! it was the smartest thing I ever heard."

There was no false modesty about Mr. Beck. He beamed at the other's praise.

"Luck helped me as usual," he said, "but you'll keep the story to yourself — won't you? I'm having a real good time down here, which might be spoilt if people knew who I was."

"Oh, that's all right! I'm close as a clam. But I thought, perhaps, you might do me a trick of your trade while you are here. Now keep your hair on, at any rate till you've heard what I've got to say. I'm a rough sort of chap, and I've made my own pile. I've been in everything but gold mines, and I haven't missed that much, for pretty near everything I touched turned to gold. Live meat, dead meat, wheat and oil—I've had a go at everything that had a dollar in it, and I've nearly always been lucky enough to get in on the ground floor and come out at the top."

"There's nothing like luck," Mr. Beck agreed sententiously.

"Well, my biggest bit of luck is Alice."

"That's so," assented Mr. Beck, with emphasis.

"Alice gets what she wants," said her father.

"So I should imagine."

"Have you seen her necklace? No! Well, I'll get her to wear it to-night. I tell you it's fine. The middle diamond I picked up from a Kaffir at the Cape. I didn't ask where he found it. I've made many a good bargain in my day, but that was about the best. There's close on half-a-million dollars squeezed tight in that bit of glass. The other stones aren't bad—the smallest cost more than the big one. You can't match that necklace in America, and you can't match the girl in the world. Now I want you to keep an eye on both for me. See!"

Mr. Beck was jointing his rod, and they were near the centre of the bay—sea, lake or river, he always fished with a rod.

"From what I have seen of Miss Alice," he said, "she is pretty well able to take care of her necklace and of herself."

"She's spry—that's so, she's spry, but girls and jewels tempt thieves. There have been three tries for the necklace, and it was nearly gone once. You know Jim Morgan?"

"He's no thief," interposed Mr. Beck bluntly. "He's a man if I know a man."

"In a way you're right—in a way you're wrong. He doesn't want the diamonds, but he's got a hankering after my girl. He'd steal her if he got half a chance."

"I don't blame him."

"Nor I, but I'll stop him. Jim is right enough. His father and I were pards once. Jim has made his pile on a cattle ranche. He can shoot and ride some, and he is very welcome to any girl in America, except mine."

"And why not yours?"

Mr. Beck had hooked a heavy fish and was playing him on his light rod while he listened and answered. The struggling, splashing fish and the imperturbable angler were curiously suggestive of the man's method.

"Why not yours?" he repeated, winding up his line, for Mr. Rosedale had come to a halt.

"Well, it's this way," he blundered out at last shamefacedly, "Jim is a good chap. I'm not denying it—and he and Alice ran together when they were children. But I promised my old woman when she was leaving that I'd marry the girl to a lord, and I don't want to go back on my word. She's good enough for any lord."

"Too good."

"Well, a lord it is to be. I'd sooner have a French lord than a Britisher. Britishers are getting too common. What do you think

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of the Count Victor D'Armaund? He's spry!"

"Very spry," Mr. Beck assented drily, as he brought the meek, exhausted fish to the boat's edge, and with a dexterous dip of the gaff flicked him on board.

"He's got five châteaux and a forest in France," said the millionaire; "he told me so, and his title comes down from the Crusaders. Of course I took his word for it, but business is business, and I've sent a man special to France to make sure. Alice seems to cotton to him; if the title, etc., are O.K., he might do."

"Yes," assented Mr. Beck drily as before, "he might—do." The last word came out by itself as he unhooked his fish, and with a quick jerk of his wrist swished the shiny bait back into the sea.

"But where do I come in?" he asked mildly, when Mr. Rosedale again came to a halt.

"Well, I thought you might just keep a look round promiscuous-like, in case anything should happen. As to fee, just name it. I'll write the cheque when we go back; you put the figure in yourself."

Mr. Beck took him up short. "Let us leave the cheque-book out of the question," he said. "I'm here for amusement, not money. I'm a rich man, too, Mr. Rosedale, I may say a very rich man. I have been lucky enough to be of service to people who have lots of money, people like yourself who were rich and over-generous, and they have given me a fair share of the spoil. I have made my own hits on the Stock Exchange as well. I've more money than I shall ever know what to do with."

"Then why?" Mr. Rosedale began.

"Why am I a detective you want to know? Because I like the work. Why does a dog set game? Instinct, I suppose. But it isn't altogether instinct with me. I have managed to help at least as many as I have hurt, and as I help the good and hurt the bad I feel a kind of Providence in a small way of business. Miss Alice and I are very good friends, and I should be glad, if you like, to keep an eye on her and her diamonds."

"Shake!" said Mr. Rosedale. "I'll take you at your word. It's a load off my mind to know you are hanging round."

That evening there was a dance at the hotel, and Mr. Beck, with his back to the wall, looked on benevolently while Miss Alice danced with the French Count. A handsome man was the Count—tall and graceful, and swarthy, even for a Frenchman, with an abundant crop of shiny black hair, curly and silky as a water spaniel's. Strangely enough his eyes were steel blue, and gave a special character to his otherwise somewhat commonplace good looks. Most men looked twice at Count Victor D'Armaund, and most women oftener, to the danger of their peace of mind.

He "waltzed divinely," and the eyes of Miss Alice, as they swung and whirled to the languorous strain of the music, beamed with the girl's delight in a jolly dance and a perfect partner. Her dress was of fluffy silk, with a pretty, rosebud pattern, and round her slim, white throat were the diamonds. It was a collar of gems rather than a necklace, with the famous Rosedale diamond blazing in the centre under the pert dimple of her chin.

She caught sight of Mr. Beck by the wall, and flung him a saucy smile as she swept past. But there was no smile for the young fellow who stood beside Mr. Beck—Yankee writ plain in his tall, lank, strong figure and keen face with deep-set eyes that glowered at the Count.

"Pop told me you wanted to see the diamonds," Alice said as she walked past after the dance, leaning lightly on her partner's arm. "Catch!"

She undid the collar of diamonds from her neck and tossed it—a flash of white light under the electric lamps—to Mr. Beck.

He caught it lightly in a big, brown hand, and followed her to the door of the ball-room.

"I will sit out the next dance after supper with you," said Miss Alice generously. "Pop tells me you are a judge of diamonds. I want to know what you think of mine."

Mr. Beck got to a quiet corner under a lamp and peered closely at the jewels that lay—a little pool of limpid light—in his hollow palm, while his practised eyes appraised their value. The huge Rosedale diamond seemed to hold a fire imprisoned in its heart which broke forth in streams of coloured sparks through every facet.

"I wonder what your history will be," he said gravely, "when you are a hundred years over ground. Will you have the same grim story as the other big diamonds to tell of trickery, cheating, robbery, and murder. Mr. Rosedale is right; these gems will take some looking after. Well, I'll do my best while I'm here—I can do no more."

Miss Alice found him in his quiet corner, his eyes still on the gems.

"Ours, I think," she said, with a demure

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little curtsey, and with her hand on his arm stepped daintily across the room to the passage that led to the terrace by the sea.

"We will be quite comfy here," she said, as she nestled down amid a pile of silk cushions in a big, wicker chair. "I sent Jim for the cushions," she added wickedly; "he doesn't mind you. But when I told him at first I was going to sit out with the Count he gave me a look like a bowie-knife."

"Why do you worry him?" asked Mr. Beck.

"What do you think of my big diamond?" replied Miss Alice.

"It's one of the finest I have ever seen. I believe it is one of the twelve best in the world."

She clapped her hands in childish glee.

"I'm so glad! I couldn't quite trust Pop; he so cracks up all that belongs to himself, daughter included. "You're sure?"

"Quite."

"Well, you shall put it on for telling me. There!"

With big, strong fingers that were wonderfully light in their touch, Mr. Beck fastened the glittering collar round the fair neck, and the thought came to him that Mr. Rosedale was right again—the daughter, too, would take some watching.

She was bewitchingly lovely in the moonlight, with that magic circlet of coloured light at her white throat. Dainty and fragile, she looked as a figure of Dresden china, but he knew what a wonderful reserve of strength was in that slight, girlish figure, where every muscle was of fine steel. He knew, too, that the dainty little lady had a mind and a will of her own.

"Now what about these two men?" said Mr. Beck, coming, with quiet persistence, back to the topic she had evaded.

"I do my best," she said, with an unctuous upturning of the bright brown eyes, brimful and running over with mischievous light. "I divide my time fairly between the two. I row and swim with Jim, and I play tennis and dance with the Count. The Count doesn't swim or row, and Jim doesn't play tennis or dance, so it's a sort of fair divide. I'm sure neither of them grudges you your golf."

"My good little girl," said Mr. Beck, "you don't want me to tell you that you can only make one man in the world happy, though you can make as many as you choose miserable? You cannot marry both Jim and the Count—not in this country, anyway."

She bubbled over with delicious laughter.

"Oh, you dear old Mrs. Grundy! I see dad has been talking to you of the daughter as well as of the diamonds. He wants me to throw Jim over and marry the Count. Now doesn't he?"

Mr. Beck nodded.

"Can you keep a secret?"

He nodded again.

"Well, I can't marry the Count because he's married already, and two wives are no more allowed than two husbands in this country. The Count told me himself the very first day. Perhaps he was afraid I'd fall in love with him, and break my innocent little heart. Anyway he told me, and I begged him not to tell anyone else. That's where the fun comes in, you see. Pop is delighted and Jim is distracted, and I have my amusement for nothing."

"And when you are tired of your sport?" ventured Mr. Beck.

"When I am I'll tell you, but that's not yet. Now take me back. I have promised the next waltz to the Count, and I just love to see Jim glowering."

She told the Count what Mr. Beck had said about the diamonds, and the Count was much impressed. It seems that he also had some knowledge of precious stones.

"But you can never judge fairly by artificial light," he said; "it needs clear daylight to make sure."

"I will bring them down with me to breakfast to-morrow," interposed Alice—"I will be breakfasting at eleven. And you?"

"The same hour," gravely responded the Count.

"What a curious coincidence!" said the girl innocently. "Then we shall meet at breakfast most likely."

Later in the night the girl and the Count had paused by the open window, after a long waltz which they had danced through from the first note to the last. The room was hot and the crowd great. Alice Rosedale was cool, fresh, and dainty as a newly plucked flower. Nothing tired her—nothing heated her. But the Count breathed quickly, and was flushed with exercise, and his gloves clung to his fingers as he took them off slowly.

"Tired out, Count?" said the smiling Mr. Beck, pausing on his way to the door.

The Frenchman put the suggestion aside with a scornful little shrug.

"One is never tired in Heaven," he said with his quaint French accent.

"I suppose I'm getting too old for Heaven," Mr. Beck rejoined placidly. "Good-night, Miss Rosedale; good-night, Count."

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Contrary to custom, he shook the Count heartily by the hand as they parted.

When he got to his own room, Mr. Beck noticed several faint, greyish stains on the pure, smooth white of his right-hand glove. He examined them with a magnifying-glass, and then put the glove carefully aside.

The Count and Miss Rosedale met as she had prophesied at breakfast in the open air on the terrace looking over the tranquil sea just touched into sparkling ripples by the morning breeze.

A dainty breakfast tempted appetites that needed no tempting, and the beautiful surroundings heightened their enjoyment of the meal.

"May I have the felicity?" the Count asked, when they moved to a broad bench closer to the sea, and he held his gold cigarette-case open.

It was characteristic of the man and his gallantry that the cigarettes had a faint odour of violets. They were specially designed for ladies' smoking.

The girl nestled more cosily amongst her cushions and looked out over the glorious view. The broad floor of blue water was circled by a range of hills whose peaks and curves stood in sharp outline against the sky. A fresh breeze was on the wing, and little waves, white-edged with foam, raced shorewards.

A white-sailed yacht a hundred yards from where they sat gave brightness and life to the picture. The crew were busy aboard, apparently hoisting sail and weighing anchor for a cruise.

To the right, Mr. Beck in his motor-boat was moving slowly with a fishing-rod arched over the bow and a line trailing through the sparkling water.

A softer light dawned in the girl's eyes as she looked out over the sea, wholly oblivious of the handsome Frenchman at her side.

"You have forgotten the diamonds," he said tentatively; "is it not so? Young ladies forget—yes."

She woke up suddenly at the sound of his smooth voice.

"Wrong," she said sharply; "women never forget when they want to remember. I have brought you the diamonds."

She drew the case from a flimsy little bag of brocaded silk where she kept her handkerchief and purse, and handed it to him carelessly.

He took it as carelessly, but she noticed at the time that his hand trembled as he took it and his face paled. Perhaps he had some presentiment of what was to follow.

When he opened the case a cry of delight escaped him. The diamonds were one blaze of dazzling, many-coloured light in the sunshine. The Count examined them carefully. "They are priceless!" he murmured. "Priceless! Matchless! May I be permitted? In your dark hair they would superbly show."

But as he took a hasty step forward to where she sat, his foot caught in the edge of the rug and a stumble shot him against the railing that, waist high, guarded the terrace. His feet went up and his head down as he struck, and he was flung in an awkward heap into the sea. The diamonds left his hand as he fell, and shot in front—a curved streak of light.

A frightened scream broke from the girl's lips. She was on her feet in a moment, at the edge of the terrace with eager eyes on the tossing water. Like a flash she remembered that the Count could not swim, and she stood ready to plunge to his rescue the moment he showed above the surface.

But he never showed. He went down like a stone, and the water closed on him unbroken.

While the girl stood poised like a statue of a diver at the terrace edge, Mr. Beck, who had heard the scream and seen the splash, turned his motor-boat sharply towards the terrace, and as it shot by plunged for the spot where the Count had disappeared. The frightened girl thought he, too, was lost, so long he remained beneath the water, but his head at last broke the surface at least twenty yards further out to sea than where he went in. He came up empty-handed, and turned and swam straight for the motor-boat which had drifted in close to the terrace.

Meanwhile the crew of the yacht who had a full view of the accident dropped the sails they were hauling and rushed to the side excitedly. Two of them clambered into the punt that dangled at the stern, and rowed slowly backwards and forwards over the hundred yards' space of water that lay between the terrace and the yacht, with eyes close to the surface searching the depths.

It was all in vain. All in vain, too, a little later, a swarm of volunteers composed of expert swimmers and divers from the hotel, explored the water in all directions. There was no current in the place. The water, though deep, was very clear and free from wind, and the bottom of smooth, firm sand. The disappearance of the unfortunate Frenchman and the diamonds was a bewildering mystery.

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Mr. Rosedale rampaged over the place, now offering fabulous rewards for the recovery of the man or the diamonds; now shouting directions to Jim Morgan, who headed the splashing search party in the bay, and who was as much under the water as over it.

All this time the girl sat apart, silent and very pale. She showed no interest in the search. The man was drowned—nothing else mattered in the least. The horror of it stunned her. The passage from life to death had been so sudden—one moment smiling beside her, gay, handsome, full of life and spirit; the next dead.

What did it matter whether they found the corpse or the diamonds? The man himself whom she had laughed with and played with was gone out of the world. Sitting there in the sunshine, with the beautiful world around her, her warm heart was chilled with the horror of death. It had come so close that she could never again hope to escape from the grim shadow of that remembrance.

Her listless eyes chanced to light on the figure of Mr. Beck, and in some vague way she was cheered at the sight of him. That sedate, comfortable, commonplace figure made horrors seem unreal. After his first impetuous plunge into the water, Mr. Beck seemed to take no further part or interest in the performance. He had changed his clothes, had taken a solid, solitary lunch, and now sat comfortably in the stern of the motor-boat watching the animated scene in the water.

The quest was at last abandoned in despair.

The diamonds left his hand as he fell, and shot in front—a curved streak of light.

The white-sailed yacht meanwhile had gathered up its crew and put out to sea. Jim Morgan, his search over, was lounging disconsolately on the terrace when Mr. Beck beckoned to him from the motor-boat.

"Well?" said Mr. Beck.

"It isn't well—it's confoundedly unwell."

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'Keep cool, young man."

'You might as well tell the devil to keep cool on his gridiron. I shouldn't mind the old chap cursing and growling, but the girl's face takes the life out of me. When I spoke to her just now she didn't answer, but she stared at me as if I had murdered that Frenchman. I never cared for him overmuch, I admit, but I was sorry he went under. I'd have saved him if I could. Where did he go to, anyway? He's not in the water I'll swear."

"Nor on the land," added Mr. Beck.

"Of course not; I saw him go down."

"And didn't see him come up. So he's drowned, of course, isn't he?"

There was a curious tone in his voice as he put the question that made the young American look up suddenly. Mr. Beck caught his eye and winked.

"What the mischief are you driving at now?"

"Will you come for a short trip with me in the motor-boat?"

"Why?"

"I'll tell you and show you."

"Let her rip then; I'm just aching to know what's up."

Mr. Beck turned the electric switch, and started the engine. The bay was empty of pleasure boats, only far out in the offing gleamed the white sails of a yacht heading straight for the open sea.

"Now," said Jim Morgan, "you've got to tell me where are the man and the diamonds, if they are not at the bottom of the sea.

"There!" said Mr. Beck laconically, and he pointed a thick forefinger at the white-sailed vessel that seemed to come slowly back to them across the broad blue expanse of the bay.

"But how in creation," stammered the American, "did he get there?"

"Dived from the terrace to the boat."

"Not to be done," retorted the other sharply; "the Count cannot swim a stroke. The boat was a good hundred yards off when he went down. The man doesn't live that could dive the distance."

"That depends on circumstances," answered Mr. Beck placidly as ever; "a tow-line was one of the circumstances. I might have guessed if I didn't see, but as it happened I did see. My blundering good luck helped me as usual.

"When I jumped overboard to rescue the Count it was all plain as a pikestaff. The trick was neatly arranged. A weight laid with a line attached close to the terrace. Of course the Count could swim like a fish. He first picked up the diamonds, caught the weight, and was hauled hand over hand like a hooked fish under the yacht and up the other side.

"When I was in the water I saw him shoot past me without moving hand or foot as fast as a darting trout. It was easy to guess the rest, so I just came out and lunched and waited."

"But why wait? Why let us make a parcel of fools of ourselves hunting in the water? Why not nab him at once?"

"I was taking no risks, young man. He might have passed the diamonds to a pal As it is, I'm quite sure he and the diamonds are safe on board the yacht, though we may have a little trouble in laying hold of them."

Jim Morgan's eyes brightened, and his lips tightened at the word "trouble."

Mr. Beck nodded approvingly.

"So I thought," he said, as if answering some remark of the other. "Can you shoot?"

"Some," said the American modestly.

He had been reckoned the best rifle and revolver shot in Texas.

Without a word more Mr. Beck passed over a serviceable revolver.

"There are three of them, I think, on board," he said, "including the Count. But they won't show fight—not real fight. I want you to do a bit of fancy shooting to scare without hurting them."

"I'm there," Jim Morgan answered, examining the revolver approvingly; "it's a nice gun."

The space of sea between the motor-boat and yacht closed rapidly. Mr. Beck and his companion could distinguish the figure of a man at the wheel, and another leaning over the rail. More and more distinct the figures grew.

The man at the wheel was dressed in blue serge, with a stiff straw hat; the man at the rail wore white ducks, a blue coat with gilt buttons, and a gold-braided yachting cap. He held a binocular to his eyes pointed at the motor-boat.

With his hands hollowed to his lips, Mr. Beck sent a loud-voiced hail over the narrowing strip of sea. But the yacht held steadily on to her course. The motor-boat racing at twenty miles an hour, her keen prow cutting the water like a knife, doubled the yacht's speed. They were close under the stern when again Mr. Beck yelled out a peremptory "Stop!"

For answer the man at the helm raised his right hand; there was a puff of white smoke and a sharp report, but the bullet flew wide.

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"I thought so," said Mr. Beck; "poor shooting! Your turn now, Morgan."

Jim Morgan raised his "gun" swiftly, his arm bent double, his elbow to his side. Without a pause for aim as the muzzle went up, he fired. The straw hat, with a bullet-hole through the crown, skidded into the air, swooped on the wind like a soaring bird, and dropped far out to sea.

The steersman let go the wheel, and the yacht swung round with the wind. The man at the rails rushed to the side. Jim Morgan fired again, and his glasses jumped from his hand and crashed on the deck.

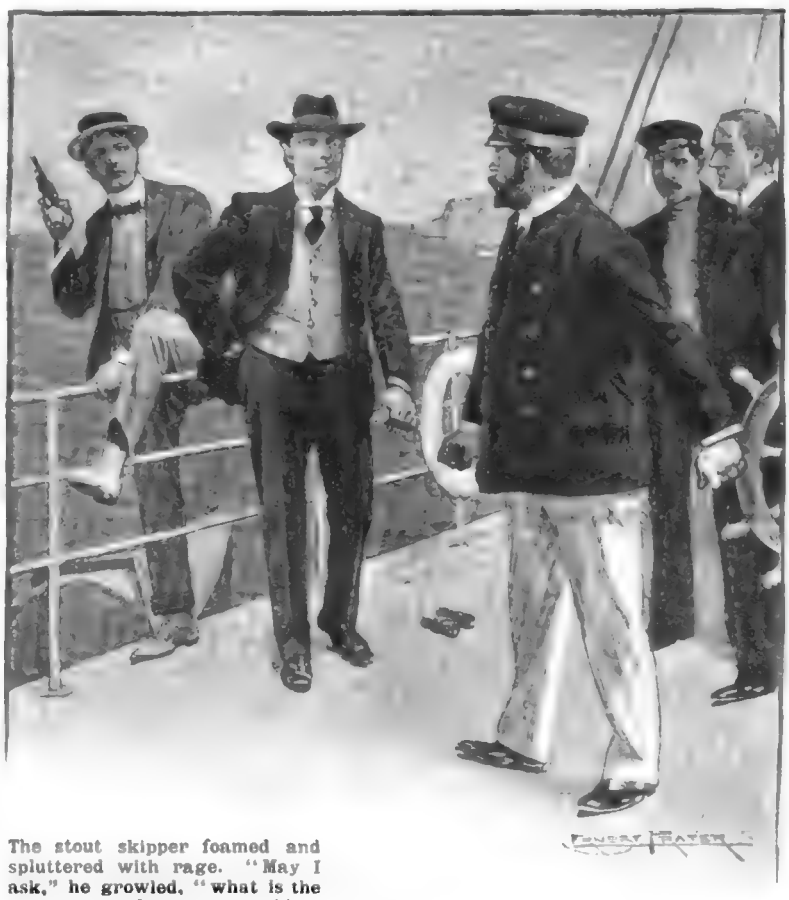
"What the blazes do you want?" he yelled.

"To come aboard," retorted Mr. Beck; "lay to!"

"You'll pay dear for this outrage."

"Someone will pay dear, no doubt," Mr. Beck retorted. "Let down a ladder."

The motor-boat, with engines reversed, glided smoothly under the yacht's side, and Mr. Beck climbed aboard. Jim Morgan, with revolver ready, followed.



The stout skipper foamed and spluttered with rage. "May I ask," he growled, "what is the meaning of this outrage?"

There were three men on deck. The stout man in the gold-laced cap, plainly owner and skipper; the hatless helmsman—a good-looking, fair-faced young fellow with close-cropped, straw-coloured hair; the third a foreign, sallow-complexioned, common sailor with shifty eyes.

The stout skipper foamed and spluttered with rage.

"May I ask," he growled, "what is the meaning of this outrage? Why have you forced yourself on board my boat? I demand an instant explanation.

"Why, certainly," replied Mr. Beck, with invincible good humour. "I've come to arrest Count D'Armaund and his accomplices for the robbery of the Rosedale diamonds."

The stout man laughed scornfully.

"Find your Count," he said "you are welcome to search for him."

"Don't need to," retorted Mr. Beck; "I've found him."

He laid his big hand heavily on the shoulder of the bare-headed helmsman.

Again the stout man laughed derisively, and the bewildered Jim Morgan cried out:

"That's not the Count!"

But Mr. Beck's strong hand gripped the man's shoulder firmly.

"It's all right, sonny," he assured the young American. "The Count's clothes,

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and the Count's wig, moustache, and complexion have gone into the sea, but the Count himself is here. Allow me," and he snapped a pair of handcuffs on the man's wrists. "You're safe for seven years," he said pleasantly. "I've got your thumb and finger-marks on a white kid glove in a drawer in my bedroom at the hotel. See! Your turn next, my friend."

The stout captain's hand dipped towards his coat pocket, and on a sudden Mr. Beck's smiling eyes blazed with anger. Quick as light a pistol was at the stout man's head.

"Hands up!" he cried sternly, "or I shoot you like a dog!"

He picked a revolver from the right-hand pocket of the pilot coat and tossed it overboard. "Ah! that's better!" and again there was the snap of the handcuffs. The third sailor submitted without protest, and the three huddled together disconsolately like fowl when a hawk is overhead.

"Now to find the diamonds," said Mr. Beck, and as he spoke he caught, out of the corner of his eye, a glance of triumph between the Count and the captain, and guessed that his task would not be an easy one.

Nor was it. For an hour and a half, aided by Jim Morgan, he searched the yacht from stem to stern without result.

He jumped to his feet briskly and picked up the binocular that lay on the deck, and examined it carefully. The bullet had cut the leather casing and slightly dinted the metal; otherwise the glasses were uninjured. Mr. Beck adjusted the focus and looked back over the bay.

"Ah!" he said at last briskly, and closed the glasses with a snap. "What a confounded fool I am to be sure!"

"Well?" queried Jim Morgan.

"We're going back," said Mr. Beck. Then with Jim's help he furled the sails, shipped his three handcuffed prisoners into the motor-boat, and, with the yacht in tow, trailed slowly back towards the hotel.

"See that chunk of cork ahead?" he said to his companion. "I want you to pick it up as we go by. I've a fancy it may come in useful."

"What for?" queried his companion.

"Luck!" replied Mr. Beck. "I've a notion it means luck."

Leaning over the side, Jim Morgan splashed his hand in the water, and caught at the cork as Mr. Beck steered dexterously close.

He gave a cry of surprise as he pulled it aboard. To the underside of the derelict cork was fastened a fine silk fishing line, from which a weight hung far down in the water.

"Haul in!" directed Mr. Beck, and hand over hand Jim brought his catch into the boat. It proved to be a small, yellow oilskin bag tied tight at the neck.

"Oh!" cried the Yankee, with sudden understanding.

"Yes," assented Mr. Beck. "Neat, wasn't it?" And cutting the string he poured the rescued diamonds like a stream of light from the dripping mouth of the bag. "The 'Count' is the smartest diamond thief in Europe."

Four people dined luxuriously together that night at the Eagleton Hotel. The Rosedale diamonds glittered again round the white throat of their lovely owner, who sat at the head of the table.

"I'm glad to have them back again, of course," said Alice Rosedale, and she caressed her gems with dainty finger-tips; "but I'm twice as glad the wretched man wasn't drowned before my eyes."

"Serve him right if he were," growled the angry millionaire. "I thought I knew a thing or two, but he has taken the starch out of my shirt front. The sneaking swindler! How they'll laugh on the other side when they hear I mistook a low-down diamond thief for a full-blooded French Count."

"Oh, he was a French Count all right," said Mr. Beck, "and as full-blooded and blue blooded as they make them. At the back of that he is the cleverest scoundrel in Europe. He was suspected of a hand in half-a-dozen big coups, but up to this there never before was a particle of evidence against him."

"Lucky I called you in," said Mr. Rosedale. "Your jolly good health, old man!" And he drained a brimming bumper of champagne. "Say, will you take charge of daughter and diamonds as a permanent job, and name your own salary?"

"All right, if I may be allowed to choose my own deputy," retorted Mr. Beck, and he laid a kindly hand on Jim Morgan's shoulder.

"I'm satisfied," cried the millionaire heartily.

"And you?" whispered Jim Morgan to the blushing girl beside him.

Though she answered "Certainly not!" she, too, was quite satisfied.

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No. III.—BEAUTIFUL HAIR AND ITS BEAUTY SECRETS.

By Augusta Prescott.

This is the Third Article of this Series, which Commenced in the March Number. The Fourth Article, Appearing Next Month, will Deal with the Beauty Bath and the Complexion.

"Men get bald earlier than women for the simple reason that they take too much care of the hair," declared a hair culturist.

"Doctors will tell you that it is possible to take too much care of a child; horticulturists will tell you that there is such a thing as overtending a plant; and it is easily within the range of human possibility to overdo the matter when it comes to taking care of the hair, which can be utterly ruined by overtending.

"Men have a way of wetting the hair before breakfast, they rasp it with a stiff brush, they rub it with a towel, they comb it many times a day, and, as if this were not enough to kill the roots, they make the matter complete and final by having it roughly shampooed very often. The result is apparent in any assemblage of people where there are men, and where the men are obliged to remove their hats.

"Women, on the other hand, are not bald. The reason is plain. They let the hair alone. It is not ruined by frequent cuttings that sap the fluid which lies in the hair. A woman never wets her hair, unless to shampoo it, and this she does infrequently. She brushes it not more than once a day, and it is very seldom that she combs it more than twice. Her head is handled tenderly, and the utmost care is taken of it. She lets her hair grow, and, beyond looping it with hairpins, she does nothing at all to irritate the roots.

"For a long time opinion differed as to the cause of baldness, but of recent years there has been almost no variance of feeling on the subject. The roots of the hair are killed by bad treatment. Anything that annoys the roots causes them to die. And when the roots die, so that the hair falls out and never comes again, there is a case of baldness. Bald spots would never come if men would stop rasping the roots of the hair with comb and brush, and would cease to wet the hair and rub out the natural oils which lie in the scalp.

"It was once believed that wearing a hat caused baldness, but this theory is no longer held. A farmer wears his hat all day long, yet farmers are not bald. The city man who wears his hat only when going to his business and when returning is bald. But the farmer has the advantage over the city man in that he knows nothing of massage, and very little about the shampoo. He oils his hair to make its wealth of underbush lie down, and this is good for the scalp. But, except for this, and an occasional wetting, he does nothing for his locks beyond simply raking them over with the comb and brush. And so he keeps his hair, while the hair of the city man fades."

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The way to shampoo is to wet the head with warm water. The shampoo mixture is rubbed into the hair and is allowed to remain there for five minutes. The hair should then be thoroughly rinsed.

This little introduction regarding baldness may seem to have very little to do with the woman beautiful, yet it does bear directly upon her case. The truth is that the modern woman — especially the Society woman—is beginning to get bald. Her temples are bare. And in affright she has fled to the hair specialist to find out the cause. The hair specialist, if conscientious, will tell her the truth.

"You are taking too much care of your hair," she will say. And when she has said that she has told everything.

Hair is a hard thing to kill. Nothing will do it except continual irritation of the roots. "Moderation, madam," advised a hairdresser, "and just care enough!"

The woman who is careful of her hair will be sure to observe certain rules regarding it.

She will keep it clean.

She will make it shine.

She will also, if very dainty, want to perfume her locks.

And she will want to dress her hair becomingly. She will make it frame her face, for such is the rule of fashion. Your hair must be arranged around your head and face in such a manner that it makes a becoming circle of its own.

Beyond this, the fastidious woman will want to make her hair a becoming tint. Of course, she will not want to colour it, or bleach it, but she will want to tone it up by natural methods. She will make it bloom.

If it be light in colour, she will perceive that it must be waved. Light hair looks better curly, and it will stand a good deal in the matter of curls, waves, undulations, and kinkiness generally. Dark hair, on the contrary, should be worn straight, in all but exceptional cases. But the rule is that dark hair, if straight and shining, is much more classic, usually more becoming, than dark hair that is kinky.

If it curls naturally, that is, of course, different.

The woman who is trying to make her hair becoming to her will soon realise that she must study her head and her face. If her nose is long and fat she must not do her

Rinsing should be done with a bath-spray. A little home-made perfume can be added to the final spraying.

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hair up in a short, fat bunch at the back of the neck. She must suit her coiffure to her face. But this brings one to a question of hair-dressing, which comes after that of the care of the head.

Hair that is properly cared for has a very clean look, and it is always glossy. A woman should shampoo her hair once in three weeks, and she should do it in such a manner that the dust is removed from the hair without taking out the natural oils. If hair flies after it has been washed. it is a sure sign that the work has been done too thoroughly. Too much of the natural oil of the scalp was washed out.

It is important to find a good shampoo mixture.

There are many good ones to be purchased, but if a woman wants to make her own shampoo she can do so, but she must use a good soap.

It is a very economical plan to save the bits of soap that are left from the soap-dish, and, when enough of these have accumulated, they can be dried and powdered. To powder bits of soap, put them in an old stocking-toe, or in a bit of muslin, and pound with a hammer until there is nothing but a powder. This soap-powder is now placed in hot water, in the proportion of half-a-cup of the soap to a pint of water. A tablespoonful of borax powder is added. When the soap has melted, there can be added about three grains of quinine. The whole is now set away to be used as needed.

The way to shampoo is to wet the head with warm water. The shampoo mixture is rubbed into the hair and is allowed to remain there for five minutes. Now comes the rinsing, which should be done with a bath spray, and it should be very thorough. The hair should be washed until the water runs perfectly clear, and this process will take no fewer than five minutes. If it is impossible to spray it, there should be nine rinsings of warm water, with a little borax-powder added to the last rinsing.

Those who like an egg shampoo can take the yolks of two eggs and beat them up with half-a-cupful of soap jelly. Into this is put a little borax, and the whole is ready to be rubbed into the scalp. It makes a very soapy lather, and one which thoroughly removes any superfluous oil that may be in the hair.

There should be a very thorough rinsing afterwards, and the hair should be well dried.

A little scent can be added to the final spraying. And for this there is nothing so nice as a little home-made perfume. It is inexpensive, and one can afford to use it freely upon the hair. Half-a-cupful added to the spray water is more than sufficient, and the result is that the hair is perfumed for days. If desired, a tiny atomiser can be filled with the home-made perfumery, and the hair can be lightly touched with it, care being taken always to dry it well. Women of fads will take a handful of highly-scented roseleaves, and bind them on the hair. These may be fresh or out of the rose-jar; either will do the work.

Drying the hair is very important, for upon

Women of fads will take a handful of highly-scented roseleaves, and bind them on the hair.

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When one is drying the hair, one should seize the opportunity to massage the roots gently wherever they seem to want stimulating.

it the welfare of the hair actually depends. Hair-dressers, pressed for time, dry it with steam and with gas. But this is not so good as air-drying, though it is quicker.

When one is drying the hair, one should seize the opportunity to massage the roots, according to the needs of the patient. The hair culturist will take the patient's head in her hands and massage the roots of the hair gently wherever they seem to want stimulating.

Women have a tendency to get bald over the ears and round the temples. While the hair is drying, the operator should rub the tips of her fingers along the line of the temples, spatting them until the hair-roots are stimulated.

In drying a child's hair the scalp should not be touched; the hair should be lightly lifted lock by lock, and each lock should be shaken. This can be done with the aid of a comb, but the comb must by no means touch the scalp. The locks should be lifted, held in the hand, lightly waved until dry, and dropped again.

In the shampoo one can correct any faults of the hair, so to speak. Suppose there is an ugly cowlick upon the temples. The hair can be brushed away from the cowlick, and can be turned and twisted a little while it is moist, in such a manner as to correct the tendency to grow wrong.

In the same way, if the hair grows down at the temples, making the ugly "widow's locks" alongside the ears, it can be lifted and massaged until the locks are trained up and back. These locks, growing down in front of the ears, give one an ugly, bewhiskered look.

If you have no assistant, you can dry your own hair by lifting it and shaking it. This is very easy to do, and will not tire you if you will seat yourself and part your hair right down the middle of the back, bringing it forward from each side of the parting.

The hair, besides being dried well after the shampoo, should be ventilated every day. This will take about ten minutes, and is best performed by daylight, and in the sunshine if possible. The hair is divided into locks, which are lifted carelessly in each hand. It is then shaken out well, and dropped hair by hair until the air has had a chance to get at it thoroughly.

Singeing the hair is something that is earnestly advocated by the hair specialists, but it is doubtful if it does the hair much good, after all. Yet, since there are so many who believe in it, there is no harm in mentioning it.

To singe the hair, you take a lock and roll it tightly down to the very end. Now with

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the tip of your finger you run along the lock, releasing the loose ends. A lighted taper does the rest.

Take the taper in your hand, with the flame burning clearly, and run it quickly along the lock. The ends of the hair will burn off, while the rest of the lock, if you have managed skilfully, is not injured. It can be done as often as once in two months.

Girls who want glossy hair have various ways of obtaining it. Here is a Paris recipe, just as it was purchased from a French hair

Waving the hair is a distinct art, and few have acquired it. The hair should be very dry, and to insure this one cannot wave the hair the day it is washed. There will be moisture left in the hair, no matter how carefully it is dried. The time to wave the hair is a day later.

Before beginning take your perfume spray and lightly sprinkle the hair with scent. Let it dry for five minutes. Now heat your waving-tongs, which should be large and round, and, taking a lock in your hand, twist

To singe the hair, you take a lock and roll it tightly down to the very end. Run your finger tip along the lock, releasing the loose ends. Take a taper, with a clearly-burning flame, and run it quickly along the twisted hair, when the ends will burn off.

culturist last summer: Take enough finely-ground corn-meal to fill a tea-cup. Have it ground three times, to be sure it is fine. Now scatter it in the hair, which should be bone dry, and let it lie upon the scalp for just five minutes.

Take a perfectly new hair-brush, or one that has been washed and baked in the oven, and run it through the hair. Brush and brush until there is not a particle of corn-meal left. The hair will soon be dry and shining. A tooth-brush may be required to take the meal off the scalp.

it around the tongs, giving a final turn to make the hair tight.

Do not make the tongs hot, but have them just warm enough to penetrate the oils of the hair. Twist the hair well round the iron and hold it firmly while you count sixty. There is a famous hair-waver in Paris who lets his patients count sixty while he holds the tongs. In this manner he goes over the entire head.

Waving just the surface of the hair is bad. The waves will break and show the plain surface underneath, where the hair is not waved.

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There is another wave, and this, too, is famous; but it is only for those who have naturally dry hair. The hair is lightly touched with oil to make it shine. Not more than three drops are used, but it is enough. It is then waved, and the waves are held a minute each. The result is a glossy and very deep wave.

When the hair is turning grey it should be treated.

There is no need to have grey hair before one is old. Too many women are grey at thirty and under. The hair can be made to hold its colour. Those who have what the hair culturists call a "sick scalp," meaning one where the hair grows very thin and grey, can improve it by the castor-oil treatment, which, though unpleasant, is good.

The hair is parted, the finger-tips are then dipped in castor-oil, and the parting is spatted with it. Another parting is made, and so on, until the entire scalp has been treated. Only a very little should be used. One hair culturist makes a few drops suffice for the whole scalp.

To make the hair glossy, scatter corn-meal in it, and then brush the meal out. A tooth-brush may be necessary to remove the meal from the scalp.

Colouring the hair is a thing that is open to objection, yet it is often done. For red hair henna is used, and about three pennyworth of it is steeped in a pint of water, which simmers down to a cupful. The hair is shampooed, and then soaked in the henna tea.

There is a very handsome actress who has a formula all her own. To a cup of the henna tea she adds two drops of ammonia, but no more. Then to this she puts about a tablespoonful of peroxide of hydrogen. And this, applied to her hair once in three weeks, gives it the brilliant gold which is so much admired.

But the colouring of the hair is both dangerous and questionable. Colouring does not always work the same way, and it often happens that a woman will turn her hair green or violet instead of blonde and gold, and again it happens that she destroys it.

The hair should be dressed twice a day. In the morning a girl can do it up by twisting it with a few pins on top of her head or low on her neck. The fewer pins she uses the better. But in the afternoon she should rearrange it.

The hair, if worn low in the morning, should be worn high in the afternoon. This is in order that the hairpins may not press too long upon a single spot upon the scalp.

It is a good thing to let the hair hang for fifteen minutes in the middle of the day. But this, for the business woman, is impracticable.

Ten minutes at night and ten minutes in the morning should be enough for the care of the hair, allowing for its brushing, its ventilating, its perfuming, and its waving, with an occasional additional time for a shampoo. And if this amount of time is spent upon it the owner will surely be rewarded. For there is nothing so celebrated among poets as a woman's beautiful hair, and there is nothing so much admired in real life.

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Real Life Romances.

The Editor will be Pleased to Purchase Real Life Romances, Which Must be Authenticated. They Should be Five Hundred Words in Length.

The Biter Bitten.

A POCKET-PICKING ADVENTURE.

THE following story, which is related by a lady, proves that one may even gain some benefit from the pickpocket.

Entering a 'bus one wet and miserable day, the lady found the usual result on such occasions — there was plenty of room outside, but scarcely any within. However, a man, attired in seemingly lavish style, by dint of compressing four of his fellow passengers into space ordinarily occupied by three, indicated that there was still room for one more.

The brilliant waistcoat with its aggressively heavy gold watch-chain, the "loud" check suit, and bright yellow boots impressed her unfavourably.

Accepting the seat thus proffered, the lady smiled her thanks. Still, in spite of the apparent politeness of the stranger, she felt that there was something mysterious about him. His clothes were of expensive material, but their combination, the brilliant waistcoat with its aggressively heavy gold watch-chain, the "loud" check suit, and bright yellow boots impressed her unfavourably.

The stranger appeared to be aware of the attention his splendour was creating, and a smile of satisfaction crept over his face. He began to dangle his fingers on his knees, the better to display the magnificent diamond rings with which they were bedecked.

However, the extraordinary affectations of the man served to lessen the discomforts of her journey. But it was with a feeling of satisfaction that she left the 'bus and arrived at her own home.

Then it was that she made the discovery, or, to word it more accurately, failed to make the discovery. Where was her purse?

She remembered the flashily-dressed stranger. He must have been a pickpocket! Why had she not thought of it before? And now he had made off with her purse and nearly five pounds.

Once again the lady examined the pockets of her jacket. Yes, there was no doubt the purse was in the left-hand side when she entered the 'bus. But what was this she felt between her fingers?

She drew out a gold ring, embedded in which gleamed a diamond of exceptional size.

"Paste," she reflected in disgust. But the thing served to prove that it was to the polite stranger that she owed her loss.

Still, the brilliance of the jewel made it appear more genuine than she had at first thought. If it were real, she mused hopefully, it would certainly be of vastly more value than five pounds.

The thought was exciting. The more she examined the ring the more convinced she became that the diamond was not paste. The next day proved that her judgment was correct, for the jeweller to whom she submitted the gem for his opinion offered to buy it there and then for seventy-five pounds!

Thus it is seen that it is sometimes advantageous to have one's pocket picked—but not always.

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Through a Trap-Door.

THE ROMANCE OF A LATTER-DAY MIRACLE.

NEW York Harbour, a mile out to sea, waves tossing gently, small boats here and there sailing with their white canvas extended before the breeze; there a lumbering tramp-steamer ploughing her way to the open sea, there an ocean greyhound gliding through the water in stately grandeur—look at all this from the deck of a little steam-yacht, and the scene lies before you.

In all there were eight passengers on the little steam-yacht, and amongst them Miss Fanny Day, who is the heroine of this story. A clear September sky showed above the shrouds of the little ship, as puffing and throbbing it moved rapidly through the waters. Those on board were enjoying themselves to their utmost. Some were singing, whilst a tinkling piano gave accompaniment from the tiny cabin.

None thought of danger. The little craft was sound. The men on board knew how to manage her. What cause for fear was there?

"When I rose the last time, I actually came up through the trap-door in the barge."

An ungainly tug, its heavy paddle-wheels churning the water into a seething froth, and dragging behind it a string of low-lying mud barges, approached. Then what happened next no one on board quite knows, but suddenly the little yacht became mixed up in the string of mud-barges, which were now discharging their filthy contents into the sea. In a moment the disaster had happened.

The horrified sailors on board the tug-boat saw the little yacht heel over suddenly, then turn turtle completely. Four figures rose to the surface, and struck out frantically towards the capsized boat, and clung to the keel until the captain of a passing passenger steamer, seeing their plight, stopped his engines and brought them off in safety.

Then, with the fear of death no longer hovering round them, the four rescued passengers had time to think of their companions. Where were the remaining four? No one had noticed them. Presently one mentioned the name of Fanny Day.

Not one of them had seen her rise after the yacht had been overturned. Each looked in the other's face, and blankly wondered who would volunteer to bear the terrible tidings to her parents.

Still, there were several hours for thought on this sad matter. For the steamer was outward bound on an excursion, and would not return to New York until the evening.

Dusk fell, and with a feeling of thankfulness the four survivors felt once more firm ground beneath their feet. But what of Fanny Day? Who would face the ordeal, and relate the tragedy of that day? At last, feeling too unnerved themselves, they deputed two of their friends to undertake the duty.

* * *

The door opened, and at the same moment the two friends stepped back in fear. For there before their eyes stood Fanny Day.

She related how, when the yacht capsized, she had sunk seemingly fathoms into green, briny water, how she had risen towards the surface, and felt the hard bottom of a mud-barge above her head.

"Do you know," she concluded, "when I rose the last time I actually came up through the trap-door in the barge, through which a few minutes before the sailors on board had let loose a load of mud."

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A Fortunate Mistake.

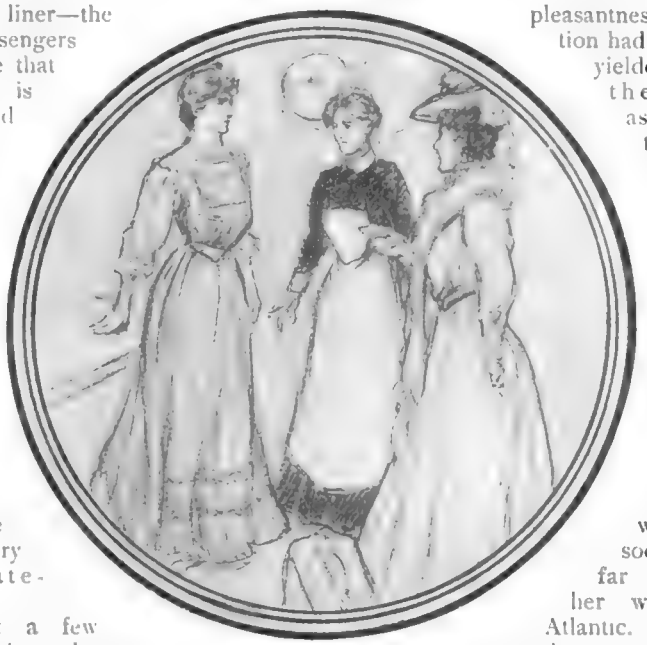
A ROMANCE OF TWO NUMBERS.

WHETHER with names or without makes no difference to this story. But for reasons which later it will be easy to see, no mention of names is made.

Here is the story:

Let the heroine be called Miss M——. Miss M——, who was at the time of this story scarcely more than a girl, was on a certain occasion amongst the passengers bound by an ocean liner from Liverpool to New York.

She was alone, but quite unconcerned, in spite of the fact and of the usual excitement which invariably attends the departure of any liner—the bustle of passengers seeking to insure that their luggage is safely aboard, and the tearful farewells—the girl descended to find her cabin. In her hand she held a ticket, plainly marked 69, and representing, so her friend who had purchased it at the shipping office had said, a very comfortable stateroom.



For a few minutes a small warfare raged between the stewardess and the lady.

So with not a few pleasant anticipations, the girl followed the stewardess into a neatly-equipped cabin, marked clearly on the door, "69."

Suddenly the stewardess stepped back, murmuring words of apology. The cabin was already occupied by a lady.

"Oh, but it is my cabin," protested Miss M——. "This is 69, and my ticket says 69."

"Mine also says 69," replied the lady, undoing a bag and producing her ticket.

The stewardess looked perplexed, and asked that she might see the lady's ticket.

"But you are mistaken, ma'am," the woman remarked after a momentary survey of the paper. "*Your* ticket is 96."

"No, surely not," said the lady, taking the ticket from the stewardess. Then her face flushed indignantly. "Well, the steamship company should have their tickets printed more plainly," she retorted. "I have unpacked my things and arranged this cabin as I want it. I shall not leave it now."

For a few minutes a small warfare raged between the stewardess and the lady. The one declared that she must uphold the rights of passengers, and that the cabin was really engaged for Miss M——, and the other refused bluntly to relinquish her position. At last, not relishing the unpleasantness that the situation had created, the girl yielded her right to the cabin, and asked to be taken to "96."

There she found that she was not to be the only occupant of the cabin, although she had paid the additional charge for the privilege of being alone.

However, days went on, and soon the liner was far out, ploughing her way across the Atlantic. Then one night there arose the cry of "Fire." Amidships the vessel was ablaze, and the flames were gaining rapidly.

Boats were lowered. Terrified at the fierce heat, and the loud reports of burning timber, Miss M—— stood helpless. She saw the sailors lowering boats into the sea. Then an officer rushed to her side, and as in a dream she found herself dropped safely into a boat.

Many days of terrible hardship followed. But at last the little boat was picked up by a steamer, and Miss M——, and all her companions reached New York safely.

Then she learnt that, had she not been driven out of the cabin she should by right have occupied, she would have perished.

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A Clever Ruse.

THE TALE OF A SCAPEGRACE SON.

THE hero is—well, no doubt it is just as well for his name not to be disclosed. At any rate, he was brought up in Manchester, and is the son of rich parents.

Some years ago the father of this young man found himself faced with a problem more awkward than many that he had been called upon to solve.

What was to become of Frederick? (The name is a fictitious one.)

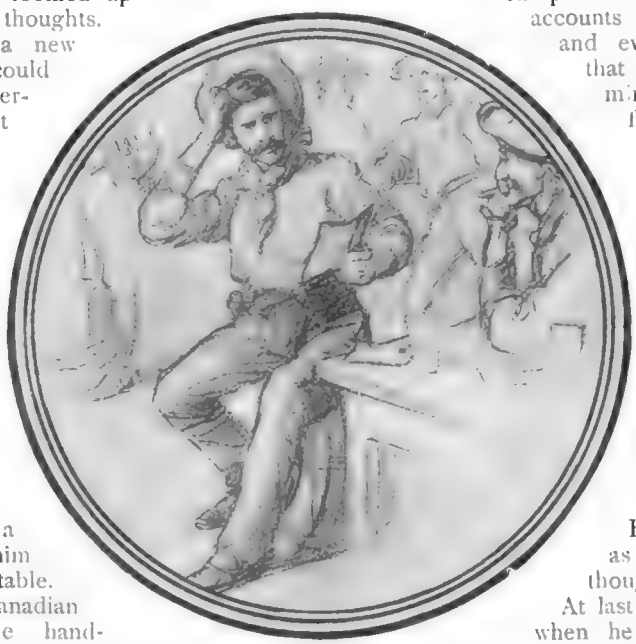
Frederick appeared to have no capacity at all except the somewhat expensive one of spending money at a most abnormal rate.

Then Canada loomed up in the father's thoughts. Out there, in a new country, who could tell what a difference it might make to the young man?

Forthwith to Canada Frederick found himself soon bound.

So Frederick matured his plans.

Some weeks elapsed. At last one morning Frederick's father found a letter awaiting him on the breakfast-table. It bore the Canadian stamp, and the handwriting that had nearly driven him to despair when it appeared in his office ledgers.



One day a letter arrived with most disconcerting tidings.

How was the boy doing?

A satisfied chuckle escaped the manufacturer as he turned over the pages. At last Frederick had settled down. "He is doing remarkably well," he informed his friends, "and gaining experience on a ranch near Calgary."

Letters continued to arrive regularly, and all spoke in glowing words of the country, its wealth, and the money there was to be made in Canada—if one only had the capital to buy and stock a ranch.

* * * * *

The English mail brought Frederick a registered letter, and a cry of joy fell from his lips as he read and saw what it contained.

Here was capital—seven thousand pounds! A ranch?—— Not he! There were pleasanter things in the world than ranches! And he chuckled gleefully. How he would enjoy himself!

Six months later Frederick discovered that even seven thousand pounds, with the kind assistance of a few friends, could show signs of having a limit. Then one day a letter arrived with most disconcerting tidings.

It seemed that his father had become so enraptured with his glowing accounts of "the ranch" and everything on it that he had determined to pay him a flying visit and to see everything. Everything! Frederick looked to see how many hundred pounds remained. That was everything. Did it number three?—well, scarcely. For the next three weeks Frederick thought as he had never thought before.

At last the day arrived when he met his father at Calgary. Yes, he must come at once to the ranch, Frederick declared.

So off they drove, and soon his delighted father beheld a handsome farmhouse, and flourishing cornfields, and cattle all in the pink of condition.

For three whole days Frederick never left his father's side, and when at last he bade the delighted old man "good-bye," and watched the train steam out of Calgary station he held in his hand a cheque for five thousand pounds.

"A most profitable ranch," he remarked to a friend whilst he showed him the cheque. "And thank you very much for the loan of it."

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BABY'S MOTOR.

I've got a splendid puffer,
Its colour is bright red;
And every night I have a ride
Before I go to bed.

Some passengers I carry,
When I feel so inclined;
Bill Bailey's one, and Golliwog
Is seldom left behind.

They sit upon the engine
And to the funnel cling,
And if by chance they tumble off
They're smacked like anything.

Now Daddy's got a motor,
It's not so nice as mine;
I shouldn't like to change a bit,
Though Daddy thinks it fine.

For I've got *such* a puffer,
Its colour is bright red;
So come along for one more ride
Before we go to bed.

Harold Simpson.

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MR. —HIS PAGES.

All Brilliant Conundrums Deserve Encomium. For Genuinely Hoodwinking, Ingenious Jokers—Knitting Light, Merry Nonsense—Overwhelming Pedantic Querists—Responding Spontaneously To Unusually Varied Wit, "X" Yearns Zealously.

Puzzle Penknives or Packs of ROYAL Playing Cards will be given as prizes to readers who forward *new* puzzles, problems, or other tricks which are inserted in this feature. Any readers communicating with "Mr. X" and wishing for a reply, should inclose a stamped, addressed envelope. All letters should be addressed to "Mr. X" (care of THE ROYAL MAGAZINE, 18 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

A SAFE "HAVE."

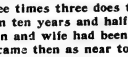
GREEN: "I say, you understand Scotch, don't you?"

BROWN: "Yes, unless it's something very out of the way."

GREEN: "Oh, this is quite common, I believe. What does 'I dinna ken' mean?"

BROWN: "'I don't know.'"

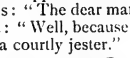
GREEN: "Well, then, you ought to."



A RHYMING RIDDLE.

When first the marriage knot was tied
Betwixt my wife and me,
My age did hers as far exceed
As three times three does three.
But when ten years and half ten years
We man and wife had been,
My age came then as near to hers
As eight is to sixteen.

What were our ages when we were married?



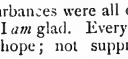
A SUGGESTION.

With a rosy blush "Mr. X" prints the following contribution:

MRS. LANE: "Do you know, I think dear 'Mr. X' should appear at Court."

MRS. BANKS: "The dear man; but why?"

MRS. LANE: "Well, because he has ROYAL pages and is a courtly jester."



PEACE AT LAST.

FARTHING: "I heard last night that the Russian disturbances were all over."

PENNY: "I *am* glad. Everything amicably arranged, I hope; not suppressed by the military?"

FARTHING: "Neither. I said they were all over—all over Russia."

A HIDDEN MYSTERY.

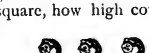
The hidden mystery is a word, and here are four clues to its discovery:

1. It is not a country though part of it is a nation.

2. It is not quite blind, for it has an eye exactly in its centre.

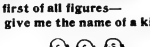
3. It has no horses, but it possesses two donkeys which it drives tandem fashion.

4. It is an unpleasant sort of thing to have about the house.



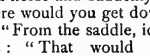
A CONUNDRUM IN CUBES.

If you were given two wooden eight-foot cubes and asked, first, to cut them into one-foot cubes, then with these to erect a pillar one foot square, how high could you make the pillar?



AN ENIGMA.

Five hundred begins it,
Five hundred ends it,
Five in the middle you bring;
Add the first of all letters,
The first of all figures—
And give me the name of a king.



UPS AND DOWNS.

THOMAS: "James, my boy, if you were out riding on a horse and suddenly wanted to get down, where would you get down from."

JAMES: "From the saddle, idiot."

THOMAS: "That would be a unique discovery, James. Up to now, 'down' has only been obtainable from the breast of the goose or duck."

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A Sign of Success.

HENRY: "I say, I'm sure you were born to be a writer."

RICHARD: "However did you know I write things?"

HENRY: "I don't. I wasn't referring to that. I was simply thinking what a splendid ear you have for carrying a pen. Immense, Henry, simply immense!"

Two "Asks."

1. Ask a friend if he is good at multiplication; of course he will say that he considers himself as competent in that branch of arithmetic as yourself. To test his proficiency, ask him how many days there are in an ordinary year. He will tell you, no doubt, $365\frac{1}{4}$.

Now ask him how many days there are in a week, and further, how many weeks in a year.

When he has fully realised that seven times 52 are 364, it is time for you to insinuate that he should go to school again, then leave him to think it over alone.

2. Ask a friend how many matches there are in a full box of ordinary safety matches. His answer will probably range between 100 and 200. When he counts them he will be greatly surprised.

Try it yourself.

Q.: What would cure a knight suffering from a pain?

A.: A good night under a counterpane.

Precarious.

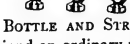
SMITH MAJOR: "What are you going to be when you leave school, Jones?"

JONES MAJOR: "Haven't settled."

SMITH MINOR: "Well, there's one thing you ought to avoid. I've heard it's a regular hand to mouth existence."

JONES MAJOR: "What's that?"

SMITH MINER: "Dentistry."



Bottle and Straw.

Hand a friend an ordinary medicine-bottle and an ordinary straw. Challenge him to lift the bottle by the straw without first tilting the bottle. When he has called the feat impossible, bend the straw and slip it into the bottle. It will fix in the "shoulder" of the bottle, enabling you easily to bring off the trick

A Terrible Disaster.

SMYTHE: "Terrible fire that in London yesterday, wasn't it?"

SMITH: "I don't think I read about it."

SMYTHE: "Oh, you must have! Everybody in the building was burnt."

SMITH: "Good gracious! How many lives?"

SMYTHE: "None, fortunately."

SMITH: "None! But you said everybody who was in the place was burnt."

SMYTHE: "Yes, but nobody was in."

The Apparently Absurd.

CAN you add four fives so as to make the total less than seven?

If not, try this method:

$$\mathbf{5} + \tfrac{5}{5} + \cdot\mathbf{5} = \mathbf{6}\tfrac{1}{2}.$$

Q.: "What is the difference between a clergyman and a policeman?"

A.: "One *is* a parson; the other *says* 'pass on.'"

A Cipher.

The code to this cipher is that each letter is represented by the number of its position in the alphabet: thus, a = 1, b = 2, and so on.

You are asked to discover a girl's name of four letters and Mr. X gives you these clues:

The sum total of all the letters is three times the value of the first letter.

The difference between the values of the first and third is equal to twice the value of the last.

A Puzzler.

Can you arrange sixteen numbers, each of three digits, in a square so that added horizontally, vertically, or diagonally each line will give you the total of the present year—1907?

A RHYMING RIDDLE: Wife 15, husband 45.

A HIDDEN MYSTERY: Assassination.

A CONUNDRUM IN CUBES: Size of cubes high.

AN ENIGMA: DAVID. The Roman letter D is 500; in the middle is V, standing for five; A is the first of the letters; and I the first of the figures.

A CIPHER: Maud.

A PUZZLER:

555	288	433	631
117	892	436	462
648	253	326	680
587	474	712	134

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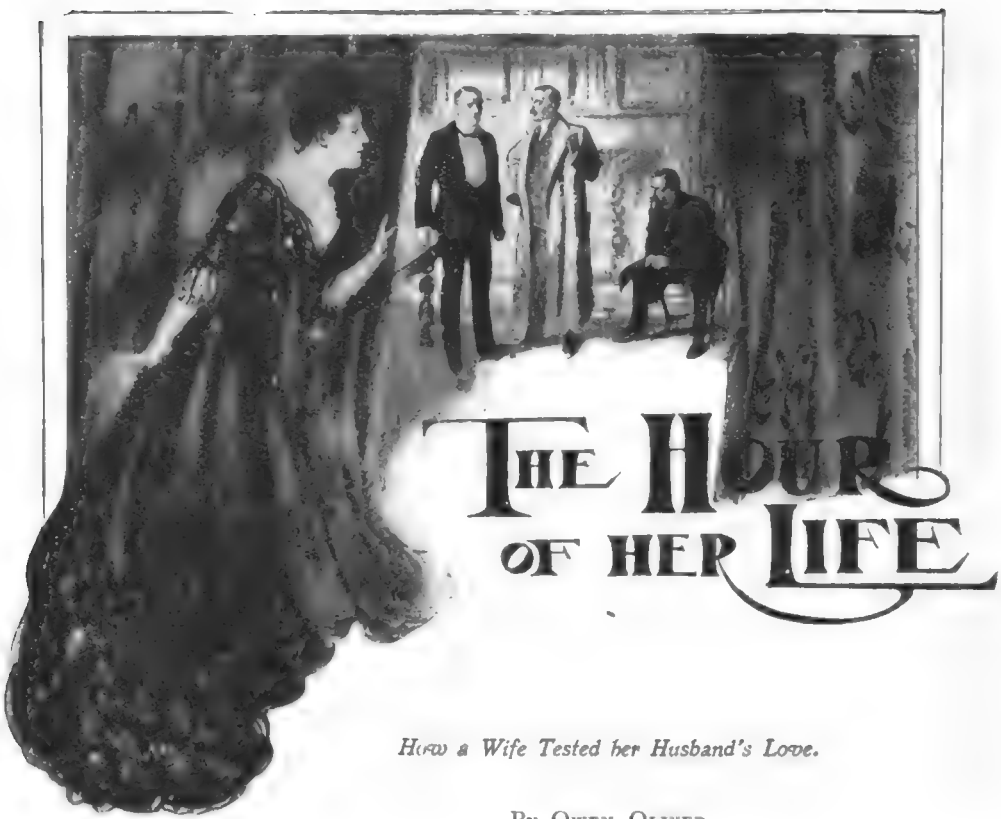

The Hour of Her Life

How a Wife Tested her Husband's Love.

By Owen Oliver.

The squire of Harnaby sat at one side of the great hearth reading the *Times*, which only reached Harnaby in the evening. His lady sat at the other side playing patience. Two shaded lamps made two little oases of light in the darkness. Otherwise the vast room was in shadow, except when the blaze of the fire made an incursion into the gloom, and showed that what had seemed a deeper shadow was a massive oak table or sideboard, and lit for a moment the portraits of grave men in ruffs or armour, and fair ladies in courtly costume, staring proudly from the panelled walls.

Sometimes the firelight fetched an answering gleam from some ancient weapon or armour; a spear that a Harnaby had borne—so the squire said—at Agincourt, or a sword that was blunted at Flodden, or a cuirass which had covered some cavalier who fought for his King. The room was quiet, but never silent, for the burning logs crackled and spluttered, and the heavy furniture creaked with the weariness of age, and the newspaper rustled as the squire turned it, and there was a soft "flap, flap" as his lady played her cards.

They were a dignified, reposeful pair, in keeping with the room. The squire was a large, grave man of about five and forty, looking no more or less than his years; a proud man and mindful of his proud ancestors, and just with the narrow justice of those who do no wrong, one would guess from his cold, still countenance; but his grave face relaxed when he put down his paper and watched his wife as she hesitated with a card in the air.

She, too, was cold-looking; a stately, handsome lady of thirty-five, with dark eyes and darker hair; a great lady, one would judge from her look, and above the display of emotion. But her face, too, softened when she glanced up from the card and saw her husband watching her.

"Is the paper so dull that you prefer to look at me, Rupert?" she asked.

Her voice was clear and pleasant, and it rang in the lofty room.

"Yes," the squire owned. "There is

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more to look at in you than in the paper, Estelle." His voice was full and deep, and less sombre than his appearance. "But don't let me disturb your game."

"Oh!" she said smilingly. "That does not matter." She swept the cards together. "What are you thinking about, Rupert?"

"You, Estelle," the squire answered.

She raised her eyebrows. Then she rose and swept across the hearth-rug in her stately way, and sat upon the arm of his chair, and he put his hand on her shoulder. It was plain enough that this cold-looking lady and gentleman had a warm regard for each other.

"I will tell you if you wish, Rupert," she offered.

The squire's hand tightened on her shoulder.

"You are a wonderful woman, Estelle," he said. "Yes. You are right. I was thinking of—what you mean; but I am not sure that I wish you to tell me. Perhaps you can understand that even? You understand so much."

"I can understand." She smiled calmly. "In the first place you would like to know who my people were, and what they did that I cannot talk about. Is that so?"

"Yes," he agreed.

"Secondly, the wish is not due to mistrust of me."

"No," he said firmly. "I have not a suspicion of mistrust of you, Estelle. It would be impossible."

"Thirdly—this is like a sermon!—it is pleasant to feel that you are trusting me, and you are not sure that you would give up that curious pleasure for the other. Is that right?"

"That is so, lady of my heart!" The coldness was gone from his face now.

"But you wonder that the lady of your heart does not trust you of her own accord. Some day I expect she will. Certainly she will tell you if you ask, Rupert. I should have told you long ago, but I take a curious pleasure in being trusted, a pleasure so great that I would try you even more to prove your love. I can never make too sure of that, Rupert. I am jealous, jealous of it. Now shall I tell you?"

"No," cried the squire. "I would rather go on trusting, lady of my heart!"

"Lady of your heart!" The grave woman leant a little closer against the grave man, and they sat in happy silence till there was a knock at the door, and she fled to her chair with a laugh like a child caught in mischief.

"Come in," said the squire. "Come in!" And the stout, solemn old butler entered.

"Two men wish to speak to you, sir," he announced. "They say they are detectives, and their carriage has broken down, and they want the loan of a conveyance to go on to Merrington."

"Merrington?" cried the lady in surprise. "Whom can they want there?"

Merrington was five miles from Harnaby. The squire's wife had lived there for eighteen months before her marriage, and that was barely three months ago.

"They did not say, madam," the butler answered.

"I suppose I must help them," said the squire rather unwillingly. "They might have the dog-cart, but it is a bad night for a horse. Well, you can tell them to come up, and I will hear what they have to say. Will you leave us for a few minutes, Estelle?"

"I should like to hear about it," she protested. "I can't think who it can be. They all seemed such good, quiet folk at Merrington. Mayn't I stay, Rupert?"

The squire shook his head.

"I am a magistrate, so they can tell me," he explained. "But they would not feel able to talk freely before you. I am afraid you must go, Estelle."

She rose and moved gracefully towards the door as steps came along the passage. Then she laughed.

"I shall stay," she declared. "They won't see me." And she stepped quickly behind a heavy curtain into the window recess. The squire frowned for a moment, but gradually smiled. There was something in this feminine weakness which pleased him, as weakness in a woman always pleases the man who loves her. After all, he thought, Estelle was to be trusted. It did not matter if she heard.

"Good-evening," he said to the men. "You are travelling late."

"We have to go when we are sent, sir," said the taller man, who was evidently in charge. "We left London this morning, and have been travelling all day. We got a fly at the station, but a wheel came off, and we've had an hour's walk. We want to get on to Merrington at once, for fear the party should get wind of it and make off. You never know."

"No," the squire agreed, "you never know. You are police officers, of course?"

"Yes, sir—from Scotland Yard. I am Detective-Inspector Bramhall, and this is Sergeant Collins. Here are my credentials."

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The squire glanced at the paper under a lamp, and handed it back.

"I will lend you a dog-cart and a good horse," he promised. "If you will call here on the way back a groom will accompany you to the station, and bring the trap home."

He rang the bell and gave instructions for the cart to be got ready, and a meal prepared for the men meanwhile.

"Is it a serious matter?" he asked, when the servant had gone.

"A matter of seven years, I should say," the inspector told him, "if they don't find it murder. You see, they were a regular gang of swindlers—forgery and all that sort of thing. A detective got on their track in Paris, but they decoyed him. The doctors think that they only meant to drug him while they got away. Anyhow, he died."

"He was a nice chap," the second man declared, "and getting on in the profession. I've often worked with him. It was murder, if you ask *me*, sir."

"And you've traced them to Merrington?" said the squire. "Umph! I thought I knew everyone there."

"This is only one of them, sir," the inspector stated. "We've got the others."

"What is his name?"

"It isn't 'him,' it's 'her.' Regular flash party, and good-looking as they make them. You might think she was a lady to look at, or speak to. She was the decoy duck, so to speak. Well, there's always a woman in everything, as I daresay you know, sir."

"Yes," said the squire—"yes, I know. When did it happen?"

"About two years ago. She slipped off there a few months afterwards while we were hunting for her in London. We've just found it out."

The squire sat down slowly.

"What was her name?" he asked.

"Her right name was Lucas——"

"Lucas?" said the squire sharply.

"Estelle Lucas; but she came down here under the name of Carrington."

"Carrington!" the squire repeated.

He had courted Estelle Carrington, o. Merrington, and when he proposed to her she had told him that she had been living under her mother's maiden name, instead of her real name of Lucas, because her family was disgraced. She had assured him, on the other hand, that none of that disgrace fell on her. He had married her, and to this day knew no more.

"You know the person, sir?" the inspector asked.

"I know—Miss Carrington—Yes—Are you quite sure of your facts, inspector? Miss Carrington—or Lucas—seemed to me to be a lady who—who was entitled to my utmost respect."

"You might well take her to be, sir. Most likely she was brought up to be one; more shame to her!"

"You distress me greatly," said the squire.

There was a long silence.

"I am sorry, sir," said the inspector, "as the lady is—as you knew her. You've been taken in, I am afraid, sir."

"It seems so," the squire owned; "but I cannot help hoping that she may have some explanation. Perhaps if she knew that you wanted her, she would come forward of her own accord and explain?" He glanced into the shadows towards the curtain. The table creaked sharply and he started.

"She knows that she's wanted right enough," the second man declared; "and, as for explanation—well, I was on her track before, and I know every line of her history. She was a bad lot, sir; an out-and-out bad lot. I don't mean that she wasn't 'respectable'; but she was the moving spirit and the brains of the whole concern, and the 'decoy duck,' as the inspector says—a splendid-looking woman, as you'll have seen, sir."

"Yes," the squire assented. "Yes; she seemed to me a very—a very splendid woman. Well, it is my duty to assist you in apprehending her, and so——"

He stared at the curtain afar in the shadows. The firelight flashed suddenly, and he thought that he caught a glimpse of a white face between the curtains. "And so—the cart will be ready shortly. You will like some food first?"

"Thank you, sir. Of course, we'll treat the lady politely, as she's—as you know her."

"Thank you." The squire's voice sounded pained, and he moved a little in his chair. "I am very—grieved!" he owned.

"You would be, sir," the inspector agreed. "But, of course, we shan't mention your name in any way. I don't think we need take up any more of your time, sir."

"Thank you." The squire rang the bell. "I should be glad if you would refrain from mentioning the lady downstairs."

"Very good, sir. Good-evening."

"Good-evening."

The men went out.

The squire turned towards the place where

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the window recess lay hidden in the darkness, and half rose, with his hands on the arms of his chair.

"Estelle!" he called under his breath. "Estelle!"

There was no answer. He rose slowly, walked slowly across the room into the shadows, into the darkness behind the curtain. Presently he came out holding a silent woman by the arm, and led her to a chair.

"Estelle!" he said again; but she did not speak, only sat looking at the fire. Her face was inscrutable. He turned to her with a sudden despairing gesture.

"Have you *nothing* to say, Estelle?" he asked, and when she did not answer he made a sound almost like a sob. "Mine is an old name to be disgraced!" he said with a catch in his voice.

"Have you *nothing* to say, Estelle?" he asked.

"Oh!" she said, in a quiet, level tone. "Your name!—You can give me up as Estelle Carrington—or Lucas! Your servants will keep counsel, and no one will inquire about my doings down here. You can save—your name!"

"I must save *you*, Estelle," said the squire.

"Me? Why should you? And what can you do?"

The squire drew a deep breath.

"It will take them over an hour to go to Merrington and back," he said. "As soon as they have started, I will go out to the stables and saddle our horses. You must join me quietly. I have about a hundred pounds in cash, and you must take your jewellery. We may get to France."

She looked up quickly. There were tears in her eyes now, and the lamplight sparkled in them.

"You mean to come, too?" she asked.

"Of course!" said the squire.

"To leave your house? Your wealth? Your position? Your—*name?* To become an outlaw?"

"Yes, Estelle."

"You do not ask the truth of it first?"

"No, I should have to save you anyhow."

"Anyhow? Even if it were—what the man said? If I were—a murderess?"

"Even then," said the squire. "But you are not, Estelle."

"No. I am not *that*. You would do this—because I am your wife?"

"Because you are my wife. And because you are—what you are now. Because to me you have been a good and noble woman, Estelle."

She staggered to her feet and threw out her arms.

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The faces of the men were pale and troubled, but the squire's wife stood calm and smiling and beautiful.

"Because you love me?" she begged. "Rupert! Because you love me?"

"Hush! I love you, Estelle. But what our future relations will be I cannot judge, till I hear what you have to tell me—afterwards."

"I love *you*, Rupert. You will remember that?"

"I will remember that, Estelle. I will remember also your better self, as I have known it. I will remember everything in your favour, but——They are a long time going." He paced the room, and presently walked to the window. "The dog-cart is coming round. We must waste no time. You had better get ready now."

She turned towards him.

"Rupert," she said impressively, "escape is hopeless, as you must know."

"The chance is small," he owned; "but it is the only one."

"For me—we will say so. But for *you!* Rupert—my husband!" She gave a sharp cry, and he a dull groan. "You would be facing almost certain ruin for a hundredth chance of saving me. You shall not do it. I will give myself up."

She moved to the bell, but he caught her and held her back.

"Estelle," he declared, "I have only a hundredth chance of a hundredth chance of happiness—the chance that I may be able to save you, and that afterwards, when you have told me all, I may be able to hold to you. For that small chance I am ready to risk everything else." She wiped her eyes quickly.

"Suppose I told you that—that you would not be able to hold to me?"

The squire's great frame shook.

"Still," he said hoarsely, "I would risk all to save you. Estelle, if you were guilty I could not bear the agony of knowing that you were punished—in prison—suffering!—I—have—held you—in my arms. Hark!"

He strode to the window again.

"They are going," he called. "Hurry!"

She walked to the door and into the upper hall, and leant over the balcony.

"Ask those gentlemen to come up here before they go," she called clearly and steadily. "I have something to tell them."

Then she walked slowly back to her husband and took his arm.

"God bless you, Rupert," she said. "I love you, you know."

He bent and kissed her.

"God help you, wife!" he said brokenly.

"Lady of your heart?" she begged with a sob. "Say that."

"Lady—of—my heart! Keep in the shadow, Estelle. I will put them off. For the love of Heaven!"

There was a knock at the door, and he pushed her into the shadow.

"Come in," he called, steadying himself. "Oh—officer. My wife—wished me—to ask you to be gentle to this—this poor woman—when you find her."

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The inspector bowed to the lady in the shadows.

"Certainly, madam," he said. "Certainly."

But he and the sergeant looked curiously at each other. Then a woman's voice came from the darkness.

"My name was Estelle Lucas," she said, "before I married Mr. Harnaby. I lived at Merrington under the name of Carrington."

The squire dropped in a chair and buried his face in his hands. The detectives looked at each other and did not speak for some time, for they were kindly men in spite of their calling.

"I am sorry for this," said the inspector at length. "Very sorry." He turned to the squire. "The lady shall have every consideration, sir. If you like to order a reserved carriage and accompany us?— I hope there's a better defence than we think. You never know.—I have to warn you, madam, that anything which you say may be used against you. Speaking just in a friendly way, I advise you strongly not to say anything. I—I give you my word, I'm sorry."

"Thank you. You are very kind; but I must say something. Perhaps you would not mind turning up the light? The switch is just by your left hand——"

The electric light blazed out. The squire buried his face in his hands, and the officers blinked a little at the sudden brightness. The faces of the men were pale and troubled, but the squire's wife stood calm and smiling and beautiful; and suddenly the sergeant gave a sharp grunt.

"It's not the woman!" he cried, and the squire sprang to his feet.

"Not the woman?" he cried hoarsely.

"No, sir. The lady is a trifle like her, but she isn't the one we want. I'd know her out of a thousand—the other one."

"No," the inspector agreed. "This is not the woman."

"No," said the squire's wife, "I am not the woman. I have never done anything that my husband need be ashamed of; and"—she drew herself up to her magnificent height—"I never shall. The Estelle Lucas whom you seek is, unfortunately, my cousin ——. You need not apologise, gentlemen; you have behaved with great courtesy and kindness, for which I thank you. And now—if you will excuse us—*I* have to apologise—to my husband." The officers left the room quietly. "Rupert, this has been the hour of my life—the hour in which I have proved that you love me *as I love you!* Perhaps it was cruel of me—dear, it *was* cruel. But"—she put her arms round him—"I will repay you year by year, and day by day, and hour by hour—— Forgive me, dear husband——"

"Lady of my heart!" cried the squire.

THE LOST TIE.

A Tragedy in Triolets.

Morning:

"Oh, where is my tie?
There's a quarter-to striking!
How the minutes do fly!
Oh, *where* is my tie?
There's my tram-car gone by
And it's too wet for biking.
Oh, where *is* my tie?
There's a quarter-to striking!"

Noon:

"No, please do not speak!
It's the very last straw.
Another post seek—
No, please do not speak!
It's the third time this week,
As I mentioned before.
No, please do not speak!
It's the very last straw."

Night:

"I told you so, Will!
It's *just* as I said.
And here's baby so ill!
I told you so, Will.
If you had your way, still
You'd be lying in bed.
I told you so, Will!
It's just as *I* said."

B.

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BAROMETER PLANTS

The Star of Bethlehem on a fine day— —and on a wet day.

Natural Barometers from Which the Weather May be Foretold at a Glance.

By G. Clarke Nuttall, B.Sc.

Not all flowering plants are openly sensitive to the weather. Sweet peas, fuchsias, heather, hyacinths, and many of the drooping bell-flowers, for instance, are quite indifferent to it. Wet or fine, hail or snow, they make a brave show, and always keep a bright outlook on life.

But a glance at fields and hedgerows under varying climatic conditions shows that a number of flowers are not so indifferent. A meadow that in the sunshine is a mass of gay flowers, and a joy to look on, loses much of its gaiety and charm on a wet day, and we usually put down the grey change in its appearance to the dulness, and need of sunshine to lighten the field up.

In this we are mistaken, for if we go carefully through the meadow, and examine the flowers one by one, we shall find that it is really largely the flowers themselves that have brought about the transformation to greyness and uniformity. Many of the plants have closed up their flowers and completely hidden their gay petals, while others have drooped them earthwards, so that, instead of presenting their bright faces to us as we gaze downwards, only their sober-coloured backs can be seen.

Much the same thing happens, even more obviously, on those hedgerow banks where in the early summer sunshine the little Stellaria blossoms shine out like brilliant white stars from a leafy background; for if there come bad weather, our walk along the lanes shows that the gleaming stars have "gone in," as the children say of the stars above, and the ditch side is but a dull and uninteresting vista. Just as marked, too, is the change in the pretty Star of Bethlehem when the weather alters from good to bad and from dry to wet.

On a fine day the borders of our gardens may be a perfect blaze of white starriness, but let the clouds appear and the rain fall down, and the edges of our garden beds are a different thing altogether, for the white stars have withdrawn themselves and folded their petals together; the green sepals have closed over and formed a rain-coat, so that all that presents itself to our eyes is a series of rather ragged-looking plants, from whose pointed leaves and tapering, striped buds the water trickles harmlessly. The photographs of the plant here given, taken one in the sunshine and the other in the rain, show how great and thorough is the change.

Very "fair weather friends" in our gardens are the Eschscholtzias. They flaunt as gorgeousness itself in the sunshine, but they will not face even the minor weather ills. On dull and overcast, though fine, days they will not even awake from their night's sleep, but remain tightly closed. If the day opens brightly, they are lured at a luxurious after-breakfast hour to unfold their orange petals, but if it then fails to fulfil its promise of sun-

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shine, they will quickly respond to its change of mood by hastily wrapping up their flowers again. They never run the slightest risk of a wetting, and at the mere approach of a dark cloud they close.

Sometimes their method of folding up is the simple wrapping over of the petals adopted by most plants; but sometimes each petal folds into a little twist by itself, so that four small spiral pyramids stand up in the rain on each flower-stalk.

Another well-known "barometer" plant is the familiar daisy—the "day's eye"—whose yellow eye opens to the sunny days, but closes to the dull ones. Its larger, coarser relative, the dandelion, has the same idiosyncrasy. In the case of the daisy, however, since each head is really composed of many flowers, it is the petal rays of the outer strap-like florets that wrap over and protect the inner tubular stationary ones. In the dandelion, as all are strap-like, all fold up and huddle together for protection.

The Dandelion is very gay when the weather is pleasant, but retires into obscurity if the sky becomes threatening.

In the dwarf or carline thistle we notice this property of forecasting and indicating weather is so pronounced that its dried flower heads are actually used in some districts by the country folk as weather-glasses. When the sky is free from cloud, and the atmosphere dry, and fine weather may be expected, the flower heads open to their fullest extent, with the dry, scaly leaves that surround the inner flowers radiating all round.

But as the humidity of the atmosphere increases, and rain is not far off, the radiating ring rises and closes dome-like — protectingly — over the vulnerable inner part. Off this dome the water runs quickly as off a sloping roof.

The well-known little scarlet pimpernel, that finds a living on the driest and poorest waysides, is even called, in country parlance, "The Poor Man's Weather-glass," so quickly do its tiny scarlet flowers follow the changes of the weather by opening and closing. It is wonderfully reliable as a weather prophet—probably far more so than many an artificial barometer that hangs in a rich man's hall.

These are but types of many other flowers which by opening and closing serve to forecast a change in atmospheric conditions. For

The little Daisy only cares for fine weather.

On bad days the outer ring of white florets closes up to protect the inner tubular yellow florets.

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instance, such composite flowers as the chicory, nipplewort, and marigold are well to the fore in the matter, as also are such bell flowers as the clustered and nettle-leaved campanulas; the ice flowers, the opuntias and flaxes, the beautiful white magnolias, and the stately water-lilies are all barometers. The crocus, too, is another excellent example.

It is not merely cat-like detestation of water that moves these plants to act in this way. Their object is to safeguard one of their greatest treasures. In the very heart of the flower the tiny seeds are securely placed in the seed case, but round them the equally valuable stamens carrying the precious pollen dust are fully exposed to the air.

The Eschscholtzia's brilliant flowers open fully in the sunshine, but they will not expand on a dull or rainy day. If tempted to open on a sunny morning, they quickly close should the sky cloud over.

In showery or wet weather all cup-like flowers, such as the Eschscholtzias, if they remained open, would be nothing but miniature rain pools, filled to the brim from beginning to end of the flower's life. And this would be absolute ruination, for the sodden pollen dust—supposing it were not all washed away—would be spoilt.

And, anyway, no insect would care to dive through the pool in search of honey, and hence there would be no emissaries to carry out the necessary act of fertilisation from one flower to another. In fact, imagination "boggles" at the disasters that overtake cup flowers that are not weather-wise, and do not take precautions against bad weather.

And this aim—the protection of the pollen—is the one end and object of all the schemes and contrivances to which plants resort in order to circumvent the rain; it is at the bottom of all their efforts to be "barometers," and the more sensitive the plant is to slight changes in the atmosphere, the more successful it is in guarding its treasure.

But barometer plants are not confined to those which close their petals in bad weather; others among them bend their stalks and droop their heads, so that a cup-like flower becomes a hanging bell, and only the back of the flower is presented to the rainfall.

Thus the little wild geranium (or Herb Robert as the country folks call it) stands up pink and perky on bright days, but in damp weather the flower droops completely over and faces the ground. The pretty mauve heads of the sheep bit or scabious act in the same way.

The Claytonia—a native of North America, but now quite a naturalised British subject—stands up cheerfully enough in pleasant weather, but is a very dejected, insignificant object in a shower of rain.

Very striking, too, was the behaviour of a little Alpine potentilla, which grew in a rock garden under the writer's notice. On a fine, bright spring morning it was a perfect patch of gold, the tender green foliage being thickly studded all over with delicate yellow flowers. But on a dull, wet day, its short stems turned quite over and lay almost at right angles to their original position, while the yellow, shallow cups of the flowers were inverted nearly to the ground. It really reminded one of a child which throws itself face downwards on the ground when something happens not to please it.

Other plants which prefer this plan of shielding their pollen from rain, and therefore pose as weather prophets, are cinquefoil, potato, many kinds of wood-sorrel, some of the campanulas, the tower

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rock cress, the chickweed, and many others.

The willow herb is a particularly wily plant in this matter. On a bad day some of the flowers will be seen to be bending over, while others remain erect, and the natural inference is that their *rôle* of barometer is uncertain and merely a matter of chance. But careful observation shows that it is the older flowers that do not bend; the younger ones all do, and a little intimate knowledge of each flower's life-history explains the point fully.

The Claytonia stands up very cheerfully on fine days—

—but droops its head and is very miserable in the rain.

Each flower has a life of three days only. On the first two of these the stamens are ripe and scattering their pollen on all visitors; on the third day the stamens are over and their function ended, but the carpels containing the seeds are now ready for inoculation by pollen—hitherto they have not been so.

This is a clever scheme to insure cross-fertilisation, but its interest to us now is that the flowers do not droop over on the third day, because there is no longer any necessity to protect their pollen. Hence it is really only during the first two days of each flower's life that it ought to be classed among the "barometers."

But, it may be asked: how is it, if rain is so injurious to flowers, that all flowering plants are not barometers, and either close or droop in wet weather? Why should there be these exceptions, few and marked enough to be notable?

Well, the fact is that most plants do make some provision for their flowers against the rain, but this provision can be made in many different ways. There is no *necessity* to turn into a barometer to effect it. In such plants as the monkshood, violet, yellow rattle, snapdragon, sweet pea, etc., their curious-shaped petals provide a permanent roof over the stamens; in the globe flower the yellow sepals never completely open out, but always close the stamens in. In the arums the green sheathing spathe is a protection.

Again, many plants which bear their buds in an erect position to begin with, invert them into a drooping position directly they begin to open, and remain thus until after the maturity of the pollen, when the stalks once more straighten themselves and the fruit is borne on an upright stalk. This happens, for instance, in the fritillaries, the water avens, brugmansias, deadly nightshades, lilies of the valley, and many others.

Then, too, some plants have little lids to their anthers (or pollen boxes); such are the laurels and the bastard toad flax, and these lids close in the damp and only open when the atmosphere is dry, so there is no need for the flower to move. In the bastard toad flax the lids are so sensitive that they will shut within thirty seconds of moisture approaching them.

A little Alpine Potentilla in the sunshine.

In bad weather its stalks turn right over, and only the backs of the flowers receive the raindrops.

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A PASSAGE OF ARMS.

The Story of a Girl, Three Men, and a Dog.

By Herbert G. de Hamel.

Peter Murchison was one of those fortunate individuals with a taste for hobbies, and the necessary leisure for its gratification.

His walls were hung with dainty little water-colour sketches—"Peter Murchisons," every one of them. There was scarcely a single wooden article in the house which he had not carved into quaint and beautiful designs. If you took down a book from the well-filled shelves, the chances were ten to one that Peter had bound it. If you——; but suffice it to say that were you to praise any inanimate object in the house, you would find Peter blushing modestly at praise of his own handiwork.

His latest hobby had been matrimony. I say *had been* advisedly. For once in his life he had failed dismally, and had decided to abandon the project and take up poker-work instead.

Had he been possessed of a little more experience in such matters, he would never have come to so rash a determination. One may take up the weapons of love lightly enough. Laying them down under compulsion is quite another matter. But, up to this point, his serious relations with the other sex had been confined to one of flirtation.

Mildred was a beautiful, imperious, queenly girl, with charming manners and extreme conversational ability. Strangers experienced quite a shock on discovering that she was not a duchess.

Why she had ever decided to flirt with Peter was always a mystery to him. At first he had been a trifle scared. In the earlier stages he occupied the position of "flirtee," if I may coin such a word. After a time, being a healthy-minded person and a great admirer of beauty, he undertook his full share.

Mildred then proceeded to fall desperately in love with him. To Peter, this was but a new and delightful phase of flirtation. He was really very ignorant in all these matters. He enjoyed being seen out with her. He enjoyed the envious looks of his fellow men. He enjoyed the cosy evenings when Mrs. Marlowe had retired to write letters. He enjoyed—; but, no—Peter kissed and never told—so why should we?

This delightful state of affairs continued for two years. Mildred waxed more and more lovely. Peter complacently looked forward to a joyous lifetime of harmless flirtation. This is what he called it in his thoughts, and he never lied to himself.

The awakening came after his return from a three months' visit to central Europe. One of his hobbies was the collection of butterflies. He hastened round to see Mildred on the evening of his arrival in town. She listened attentively and politely to his descriptions of new specimens. She had always been attentive and polite, but not quite in the same way. Something right inside Peter worried him.

There was a change in their farewell, too, that evening. Mildred accompanied him to the door to see him off, as of old. The architect could not have designed a better hall for leave-taking purposes. Peter had

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often called down blessings on his head. On the way home he pondered over the distinction between the active and passive moods in certain verbs. It is really an important distinction.

The next evening his farewell was confined to a handshake. "No, please not," she had said, and Peter obediently removed his arm. The something right inside him developed into a definite and heavy lump. He was especially kind and affectionate to his terrier on his return. Vixen licked his hand in grateful appreciation. Their mutual devotion was an affair of many years standing.

On the occasion of his next visit, Peter was shown out by the maid. She was a nice maid, but Peter glared at her angrily. Even then she was unable entirely to banish the sympathy from her eyes.

Gradually the truth came out. Mildred desperately fought a losing battle, but, driven out of her last trench by the persistent Peter, she confessed that there was "someone else."

He took a morbid pleasure in still visiting at the house. He endured exquisite torture from every smiling glance and subtly stressed word. Telepathic waves throbbed through the air. His mental receiver, tuned to the correct key by long training, translated them immediately to his brain. To make matters still worse, he cordially detested his rival.

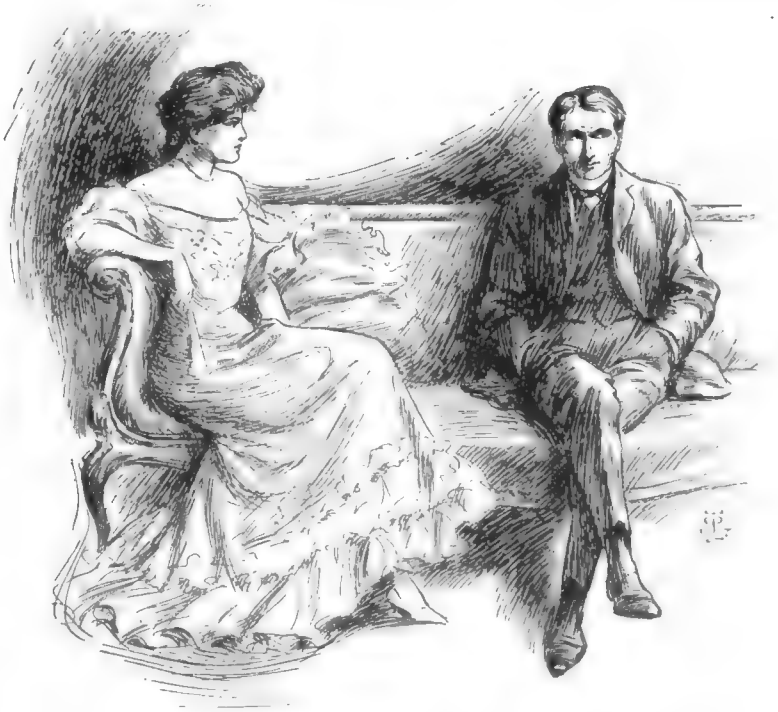
The man was an absolute bounder. He was universally "cut," but especially severely by men in the Service. Peter explained all this to her. He did so through no motive of jealousy—but from sheer grief at her intimacy with such a man. He was severely snubbed for his pains. Mildred was possessed of a lively contempt for the opinions of her neighbours. She did not believe that Major Brent was a bounder. His brother officers and the majority of other "Town" men were fools. He was a friend of hers, and she was proud of it.

Peter listened in mutinous silence to an hour's eulogy on Major Brent. At its conclusion he remarked quietly that the circumstances of Brent's "retirement" scarcely warranted the retention of his rank. Mildred rose scornfully to her feet, and held out her hand. Peter raised it to his lips and kissed it. I doubt if he has ever quite realised the brilliance of this manœuvre.

He began to neglect his other hobbies. The desire to embark on matrimony filled his mind to the exclusion of aught else. Had he broached the subject to Mildred but one short month before, she would, he now realised, have nestled into his arms with a little cry of joy. He cursed himself inwardly for not having fallen in love with her exactly one month sooner.

Peter is not the first man who has dated his love from the moment he first realised it.

Matters went from bad to worse. Mildred did not mean to be unkind. She told him so several times. She also assured him that she would be miserable if he withdrew his friendship. Meanwhile she dropped the use



Peter listened in mutinous silence to an hour's eulogy on Major Brent.

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of his Christian name, and exemplified her friendship for him in divers other strange ways.

Her ideal man, she informed him, was one who had done heroic deeds. A being who had experienced no perilous adventure was unworthy of love. No man had a right to that appellation till he had proved himself a hero.

Now Peter was, in every way, a most excellent and worthy person, but, so far, his life had run tranquilly in peaceful grooves. He had absolutely no desire for adventures. He felt certain that his courage would fail him at the critical moment. He was perfectly candid on this point, and therein proved himself more truthful than nine-tenths of his fellow-men.

Mildred sneered unkindly when he confessed this weakness to her. She pointed the sneer by recounting several of Major Brent's more exciting adventures. Peter, having proved that one of these was a sheer physical impossibility, was compelled to retire in disorder.

Shortly after this incident he mutinied. He decided, as before stated, to put away all thoughts of love. His superfluous energy should be expended in the suffocating bliss of poker-work. Mildred should henceforth pass entirely out of his life. Her very memory should be metaphorically trampled under foot and forgotten.

He ordered the necessary implements for his new work, and strode round to her house to say good-bye for ever. She was not at home. She had, however, left her voice behind to entertain Major Brent's voice. Peter had hitherto been unaware that voices wore top-hats. He had learnt a great many things in the last few months.

For two months he saw nothing of her. He was no longer in love with her. That was entirely a thing of the past. He told Vixen so repeatedly.

If the night were wet he would light up his pipe and sit before the fire. His gaze would be steadily fixed on a photograph which stood upon the mantelpiece. At the end of half-an-hour he would resolutely take out of the cupboard a piece of wood and the modern substitute for a hot poker. For some ten minutes all would go well. At the end of that time he usually forgot that he had forgotten Mildred. Through the pungent clouds that arose from the seared wood he pictured her leaning gracefully back in her pet corner of the sofa, her face and hair softly outlined against the pale blue cushions.

He pictured Major Brent seated in the place that had once been his, two-thirds of the way along towards her end of it. He pictured her smile, and involuntarily his lips shaped themselves. He pictured Major Brent's arm stealing round those fair shoulders. He pictured the next action of a man towards a pretty girl who likes being kissed. At this stage I am afraid that Peter usually swore.

The "poker" having become quite cold, he would replace the apparatus in the cupboard.

"Vic," he would say, "I am fully determined to remain a bachelor. Nothing will ever induce me to marry."

Vixen invariably jumped to her feet and barked vigorous applause at this speech. It was the one that always preceded the evening biscuit. She was really very human in some things.

* * * * *

"Be quiet, Vixen!" said Peter drowsily.

Vixen continued to whine uneasily. After a little while she gave a short, whispered bark.

"Be quiet, Vic!" he repeated angrily. It is very annoying to be awakened out of a pleasant dream. "Go and lie down at once!"

Vixen always slept in her master's room. Her bedstead was a circular one made of wicker-work. A little doorway had been left in its wall. Vixen made a point of always entering over the opposite side. Peter heard the basket-work creak, and settled down to slumber once again. He was fortunate enough to pick up the threads of his dream. Sword in hand he stepped over the body of the late Major Brent and advanced towards Mildred. She held out her hands to him. "Peter!" she cried joyfully. "Peter!" "*Wuff! Wuff!*"

Peter awoke once more. "Be quiet, will you!" he exclaimed. Vixen answered in a long, low growl, which ended in another indignant "*Wuff!*" A sudden muffled noise caused Peter to sit up in bed and listen intently. The noise was repeated. Someone was undoubtedly moving down below in the hall.

"*Wuff!*" said Vixen again.

A compressed feeling seized on Peter's ribs. They refused to expand when he tried to breathe. Perhaps people who tight-lace experience a similar sensation. His chest also became suddenly rigid. Imaginary fur bristled all over his body, but especially up his spine. The bedclothes clung round his legs in an absurd manner.

The hinge of his door, squeaking suddenly, startled him nearly out of his senses. His

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heart was thumping wildly, aching from innumerable bruises as it leapt against his unyielding ribs. He strained his eyes in the direction of the door, but could distinguish nothing in the darkness. His throat had become dry, and he dared not swallow. It would prevent him from listening for a moment. A second squeak of the hinge was followed by a hoarse snuffle. Vixen was opening the door pneumatically — in that mysterious way known only to the canine tribe.

"Come *here!*" said Peter in a harsh whisper. The burglar, if left alone, might depart peaceably with such portable property as took his fancy. His presence upstairs was to be avoided at any cost. Vixen wagged her stump pleadingly—a somewhat useless proceeding in the dark.

"Come here!" repeated Peter. He was answered by a snuffle that ceased abruptly as the door creaked open. Another second, and Vixen would be hurling herself on the invader.

"*Come here!*" shrieked Peter in a whisper. "*Vixen!*"

Duty and inclination battled fiercely in the small breast. The scents of some unknown and undesirable persons floated up from below. Surely her master must understand.

"There are burglars downstairs; I *must* go and drive them away!" she explained in another short "*Wuff!*" followed by a whine.

"*Will* you come here!" intreated the agonised Peter. "Vic! Vic! *Vic!*"

Vixen reluctantly left the open door and jumped on to her master's bed. She was immediately seized and swept beneath the bedclothes. To be exact, the clothes were hastily pulled up over both of them. The ostrich hides its head in the sand, and imagines itself to be quite safe from pursuit. Peter, buried beneath the blankets, heaved a stifled sigh of relief. He could no longer hear those dreadful sounds.

Vixen, on the contrary, was extremely dissatisfied. Under ordinary circumstances, when the warmth and the general climatic conditions of the temporary tent would have been most enjoyable, she was not even allowed near the bed. Now, when she particularly wished to be outside, where she could use her nose and ears, she was held a firm prisoner. It was most exasperating.

Presently Peter, to avoid complete asphyxiation, opened up a small connection with the outer air. The little tunnel was instantly blocked by the terrier's head. Her nose twitched eagerly. The hostile scent on the air was more than she could stand. Her legs shot out and, using the more resilient portion of Peter as a spring board, she shot out on to the floor.

"Ouch!" gasped Peter, curling up still tighter. The blankets slid from his head. He heard Vixen dash down the stairs. A series of fierce and rapid barks followed by a muffled oath broke the stillness of the night.

"Come 'ere—curse you!" snarled a man's voice.

Peter was sobbing hysterically. He had almost completely lost control over himself, when he heard a sharp yelp, followed by a howl of pain from the terrier. Someone was hurting Vixen! He leapt out of bed and groped his way to the door. Someone was hurting Vixen! This thought alone filled his mind as he raced down the passage.

At the head of the stairs was a switch for turning on the light in the hall below. He struck it down with his hand as he passed and sprang down the stairs three at a time into the suddenly illuminated hall. Immediately in front of him stood a burly ruffian, his eyes fixed in ludicrous amazement on the electric light above his head. His hands still gripped the windpipe of the struggling terrier.

The sight of the bulging eyes and protruding tongue of his beloved Vixen maddened Peter to a frenzy of rage. With the impetus of his wild descent he leapt upon the intruder. The unexpected shock took the burglar off his balance. His head crashed down on to the sharp edge of a heavy oak chair. He lay motionless across the entrance to the dining-room.

Ere Peter could rise, and while Vixen still lay on the floor greedily drinking in the air, a second man rushed out of the room. Seeing a pair of knees on a level with his head, Peter flung his arms round them, bringing their owner down with a heavy thud. This time, however, no friendly chair lent its aid, and the man kicked himself free of the entwining arms preparatory to rising.

Peter's wrath at the ill-treatment of Vixen still surged hotly through his veins. For the first time in his life Peter was "seeing red." As his opponent rose to his knees he hurled himself upon him. They came down together, but Peter was on the top. From this strategic position he rained a shower of blows upon the face beneath him. Some hitherto dormant Berserk instinct had broken out in him.

Unfortunately, Bill Hutchings — or "Crusher" as he was called in his own circle—was possessed of enormous strength.

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"Well!" said the policeman. "You're the best plucked 'un as ever I come across."

For a moment he was too dazed by the fierceness of the assault to do more than guard his face. Suddenly he reached out and seized Peter by the throat and, turning over on to his side, pressed his head firmly down on to the floor.

Peter grappled and tore with the ferocity of a wild cat, but all to no purpose. He weighed exactly eleven stone. Mr. Hutchings turned the scale at well over sixteen. A roar, as of the Niagara Falls, rushed through Peter's ears. His head grew till it was a yard in diameter. An absurdly small body floated up from it in a great, curving sweep to the ceiling. The pile of the carpet grew into long, stiff stubble. The floor swung up till he saw the distorted ceiling at the bottom of a deep pit. He clung fiercely to something to prevent himself falling down into it. An express train dashed into a tunnel with a shriek. He was in the train and yet the tunnel was his own head. Someone was beating a drum till the whole universe reeled. Then suddenly his cheeks, his forehead and his throat ached and throbbed as he drew in a long, deep breath.

With both his hands he still gripped a massive wrist. His body was being jerked violently to and fro as Mr. Hutchings strove to free it from his grasp, and so get both hands to bear in releasing his left ear.

This organ was being "worried" by Vixen in true sporting style. First she would shake it rapidly and then, with closed eyes, tug at it with all her weight. Her low, satisfied growl was drowned in the flow of Mr. Hutchings' running commentary on her antecedents and personal character.

Vixen felt no doubts that she would ultimately succeed in carrying off the ear. Mr. Hutchings held exactly similar views. He was unable effectively to reach her throat with his left hand as she was pulling in short, sharp jerks from behind his head. An attempt to push her away by force had been hastily abandoned. In the agony of the moment he had released Peter. Owing to the position in which his head was held, he could not use

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HERE IS A NOVELTY.

A street hawker recently introduced a novelty in keyholes.

He said: "Here you are, gentlemen; the greatest invention of the age."

PASSER (stopping to listen): "What is it?"

HAWKER: A magnetised keyhole-plate for front doors. It will attract an ordinary latch key from a distance of two feet. All you have to do to find the keyhole is to take out your key and hang on to it."

Three men are reported to have been injured in the crowd which gathered to buy the novelty.

* * * * *

IT MADE NO DIFFERENCE.

EDITH: "If Jack Barlow were to propose to me I wouldn't know whether to say yes or no."

MAUD: "Well, don't worry, dear, I accepted him last night."

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A BRIGHT IDEA.

"How did you get Borely out of your whist club—did you ask him to resign?"

"No; we didn't like to do that; but we all resigned except Borely, and then we all got together and formed a new club."

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SHARP PRACTICE.

LADY COMMERCIAL (to her husband, who is rather cold to her): "John, the kisses you give me now are not up to the sample you gave me when you asked me to be yours. It isn't business."

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HAD MATURED HIS PLANS.

"Young man," said the stern parent, with the accent on the young, "do you intend to stay here all night holding my daughter's hand and looking her in the face like a sick calf?"

"No, sir."

"What do you intend to do, then?"

"Well, I had thought, when you did us the kindness to retire, I would put my arm round her waist, and if she did not object too forcibly, I might risk a kiss."

* * *

THE THIRST FOR INFORMATION.

BOBBY: "There is our watch dog."

WILLIE (five years old): "How often do you wind him up?"

AN IMPORTANT DISCOVERY.

"My wife," he remarked, "has made a very important discovery."

"Indeed," said his companion, "what is it, sir?"

"A new substance that is apparently indestructible."

His companion recalled the fact that the wife had been a professor of natural sciences prior to her marriage, and inquired if she had been long at work upon the invention.

"No," he replied, "and it came about quite by accident. She was trying to make a sponge cake."

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THE BROKEN RECORD.

He broke a record. "How was that?"
I think I hear you ask.
"Tell us, we beg, the nature of
His self-appointed task.

"Perchance 'twas in a motor-car,
Or on the surging sea?
A mighty feat in bicycling,
Or e'en gastronomy?

"Ballooning? Running? Typing? Oh,
It must be one of these!
Reporting? Golfing? Walking? No?
Oh, tell us, if you please!"

Then, if you really want to know,
And promise not to laugh,
He simply let the record fall
From off his phonograph!

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A FAIR QUESTION.

HE (bitterly): "Pshaw! All women are alike."

SHE: Then why in the world do you spend so much time trying to find the one you want to marry?"

* * * * *

SHE WAS FLATTERED.

MRS. SANSOM: "I understand, sir, that you have secretly been making love to my daughter, and I must forbid an acquaintance begun in that way. You should have seen me first."

SHREWD SUITOR: "Madam, had I seen you first I should have forgotten your daughter and fallen in love with you."

MRS. SANSOM: "Um——the informality of the proceedings was all I objected to. Come with me and I will introduce you."

WHAT ATTRACTED HIM.

"Stop!" commanded Miss Nurox, with a disdainful sniff. "The idea of your proposing to a lady in my station of life! You ought to know better!"

"Well," replied Mr. Hunter, "I do know better, but no richer."

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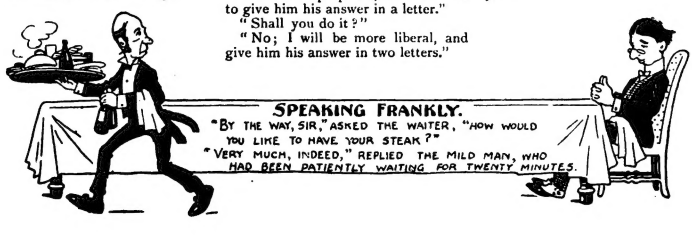
HOPELESS.

"Tom has proposed, and asks me to give him his answer in a letter."

"Shall you do it?"

"No; I will be more liberal, and give him his answer in two letters."


SPEAKING FRANKLY.
"BY THE WAY, SIR," ASKED THE WAITER, "HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAVE YOUR STEAK?"
"VERY MUCH, INDEED," REPLIED THE MILD MAN, WHO HAD BEEN PATIENTLY WAITING FOR TWENTY MINUTES.

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MR. EDITOR —HIS PAGE

"THE RAPID."

My friend the Editor of THE RAPID has been talking to me about his magazine. He brought a copy with him; we went through it together, and he asked me for my candid opinion especially of several novelties he proposed introducing.

Well, I gave the matter some consideration, and I really think THE RAPID is quite a unique publication. How the people who run it manage to squeeze between the covers all they do passes my comprehension. The Editor has my respectful admiration. I should shy at the amount of work he puts into his magazine. The getting together of such an extraordinary amount of variety would, I imagine, turn the head of the average editor grey before his time. But he seems to enjoy it, and as his readers most certainly enjoy the result of his Herculean labours he is a man to be envied.

I notice that two of the most brilliant women writers of the day are contributing to his pages: "John Strange Winter," the world-famous author of "Bootle's Baby" and so many other popular novels, contributes a monthly *causerie* on things in general; and Mrs. Neish has some pages all to herself in which to give her views—and they are always expressed with such delicacy and charm—on social life.

But I have one bone to pick with the Editor of THE RAPID. He has secured a serial from Mr. Fred M. White—such an excellent story that I am very chagrined at not having it for THE ROYAL. My readers would have appreciated it as hugely as I did. Mr. White is one of those rare authors whose stories it is impossible to leave off reading once you have begun them—and that's just what I want for THE ROYAL. Well, I suppose one cannot have everything. You have Mr. Bodkin's "Beck" stories in THE ROYAL, so I will do my best not to grudge THE RAPID readers Mr. White's work.

LOOK OUT FOR OUR JUNE COVER.

There's a wholesome little meal for you on the cover of the next ROYAL: a hunch of bread, a piece of cheese, a lettuce, and a tankard of ale. I hope you'll enjoy it. Seriously, this cover is an important innovation, and is the best thing in colour-printing which has yet appeared in England. The objects depicted—bread and cheese on the June cover, fruit or flowers on later covers—will be photographed and then printed in their true colours.

The effect is extraordinary—so realistic that it will be almost impossible to tell the objects depicted from their originals. It positively made my mouth water to see the strawberries which will make their luscious appearance on the July cover. However, it's not strawberry time yet. You look out for the bread and cheese

A REPROACH.

A lady contributor, whose verses and stories used to appear in these pages rather more frequently than they do now, sends me the following sorrowful complaint:

Dear Mr. Editor, you used to take my verse,
I'm sure that some you take is far, far worse
Than mine!

Dear Mr. Editor, you sometimes took a tale,
And some you take, I'm sure, are quite as stale
As mine!

Dear Mr. Editor, why do you always choose
The tales and rhymes of others and refuse
All mine?

Dear Mr. Editor, I'm sure 'tis really time
You took a story, or, at least, a rhyme
Of mine!

A touching appeal! Well, in publishing it I have taken a rhyme of hers, so she must not accuse me any more of being stony-hearted.

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